

HOW GREAT IS CRACK? JEFFERSON MORLEY

OCTOBER 2, 1989 • \$2.50

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Stanley Hoffmann on George Kennan • The Editors: Just Say No to Soviet Jews

Deng's Pyrrhic Victory

China after Tiananmen Square

by Liu Binyan

COMPETITIVE READING
Lawrence Lipking on the
new literary Olympics



7229D*****3-DIGIT 757
#LABA0R00097#
690976 LAB A0R00099 H458 JAN08
1990 36#RM
AMBASSADOR COLLEGE
ROY HAMMER LIB
PO BOX 111
BIG SANDY TX 75755



7445 1

LICENSED TO UNICOR
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Doing business in Singapore takes a bit of cultivation.

Although the business world of Singapore is thriving, trying to deal with its three very distinct cultures—Chinese, Malay and Indian—takes patience, time and understanding.

Let's have a meal, let's make a deal.

An essential tool of business is hospitality. Visitors are treated to lavish entertainment before and during negotiations. Also, it's important to know that you're required to return the favor. An excellent choice for dinner is the Domus restaurant

at the Sheraton Towers Hotel.
Telephone: 737-6888

Everyone's a winner.

Saving face is important. Singaporeans won't tolerate losing an argument, but they won't let you lose face either as they're very aware of the pride of others. A quick word of advice: just call it a draw.

Are you single?

Don't be surprised if people ask you very personal questions, just answer politely but keep all of your own inquiries as objective, considerate and impersonal as possible.

Northwest notes.

We now offer convenient connections to Singapore from over 200 U.S. cities. And in addition to our more responsive in-flight service, we offer you something no other U.S. airline can—the knowledge and information that comes from over 40 years of helping people do business in Asia. For international reservations just call your travel agent or call Northwest at 1-800-447-4747. For more information on doing business in Asia, call ext. 67, at 1-800-553-2215.



© 1989 Northwest Airlines, Inc.

NORTHWEST AIRLINES

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SEP 25 1989

THE NEW REPUBLIC



A Weekly Journal of Opinion

Editor-in-Chief and Chairman
MARTIN PERLITZ

Editor
MICHAEL KINSLEY

Literary Editor
LEON WIESELTIER

Managing Editor
DOROTHY WICKENDEN

Senior Editors
FRED BARNES, ANN HUTBERT,
MICKY KAUS, MORTON M. KONDRACK,
ROBERT WRIGHT

New Republic Books Editor
(Basic Books)
BILL NEWLIN

Economics
ROBERT KUTTNER

Films
STANLEY KAUFFMANN

Theater
ROBERT BRUSTEIN

Music
EDWARD ROHSTEIN

Poetry
RICHARD HOWARD

Art
MARK STEVENS

Architecture
HERBERT MUSCHAMP

Contributing Editors
ROBERT COLES, HENRY FARLIE,
JAMES K. GLASSMAN, HENDRIK HERTZBERG,
CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, VINT LAWRENCE,
LOUIS MENAND, ADAM MICHNIK,
ROBERT B. REICH, JONATHAN RIEDER,
MAGGIE SCARF, RONALD STEEL,
RICHARD L. STROUT, E. V. THAW, ANNE TYLER,
NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN,
MICHAEL WALZER, C. VANN WOODWARD

Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLINSKY

Assistant to the Editors
JUNE HALFY

Assistant Editor
LEONA HIRAKAWA ROTH

Production Manager
BRUCE STEINKF

Assistant Production Manager
KRISTIN CONRAD

Production Associate
ERIC V. PETERSON

Literary Assistant
SARA MOSLE

Interns
DANIEL GROSS, DAVID P. HAMILTON

President
JEFFREY L. DEARTH

Publisher
JOAN M. STAPLETON

Associate Publisher
TOM THICKS

Controller
JEAN GANDY

Advertising Manager
JENNIFER BARRETT

Circulation Director
PATY JONES

Accounting Manager
CHRISTINA R. OVERHOLSER

Advertising Assistant
DARLENE BUSCAGLIO

Accounting Assistant
JULIE HAWKINS

Circulation Assistant
PAULI SAJDA

Back Issues and Reception
MAXINE OAKLEY

Corporate Marketing
GUY STODARD

Leadership Network Advertising
ROBERT E. SENNOTT JR.

OCTOBER 2, 1989



Cover by Vint Lawrence for **THE NEW REPUBLIC**. Article on page 21. TRB From Washington will return next week.

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 3,898

4 CORRESPONDENCE The teaching profession, terrorism, &c.

7 THE EDITORS KNOCK, KNOCK For years we've been telling the Communist world: let your people go. Now that they're leaving, must we take them in?

8 NOTEBOOK About ice cream, cigarettes, and other addictions.

9 FRED BARNES WHITE HOUSE WATCH: AVOIDING TROUBLE It's easy if you avoid leadership too.

12 JEFFERSON MORLEY WHAT CRACK IS LIKE A firsthand account of the drug you've heard so much about from people who've never tried it.

13 WILLIAM SALETAN JAR WARS Thanks to drug hysteria, politicians are pissing in bottles as eagerly as they are kissing babies.

14 PATRICK GLYNN WAITING FOR WYOMING The Bush administration's dangerous policy of "constructive engagement" with the Soviet Union.

16 ALAN BERLOW WHO'S THE PUPPET? Now that Cambodian peace talks have collapsed, it's time to stop letting Prince Sihanouk jerk us around.

18 MICHAEL STANFORD THE STANFORD LIBRARY Why it's not ridiculous for the Bible and Toni Morrison to be on the same "Great Books" reading list.

21 LIU BINYAN DENG'S PYRRHIC VICTORY Tiananmen Square was a temporary setback for China's democracy movement, but a permanent defeat for the old men.

26 STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS: CASUALTIES OF HOLLYWOOD Brian DePalma's *Casualties of War* is one banality after another.

28 LAWRENCE LIPKING COMPETITIVE READING My reading can beat your reading: how the literary critics' rules for talking about texts have changed.

34 J. D. MCCLATCHY POEM *Weeds*

35 STANLEY HOFFMANN MR. X *Sketches from a Life* by George F. Kennan; *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of U.S. Foreign Policy* by David Mayers; *Kennan and the Art of Foreign Policy* by Anders Stephanson; *George F. Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast* by Walter L. Hixson

38 ROBERT KUTTNER THE ECONOMIST'S HEART *Passions Within Reason: The Strategic Role of the Emotions* by Robert H. Frank

40 CLARENCE BROWN PEN PALS *The Human Experience: Contemporary American and Soviet Fiction and Poetry* edited by the Soviet/American Joint Editorial Committee; *The New Soviet Fiction: Sixteen Short Stories* compiled by Sergei Zalygin

42 WASHINGTON DIARIST CRAVINGS

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 201, Number 14, Issue 3,898, October 2, 1989. (Printed in the U.S. on September 13, 1989.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 9 & 16, July 17 & 24, Aug. 7 & 14, and Sept. 18 & 25, 1989) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, \$59.97; foreign, \$89.97; Canada, \$74.97. Back issues, \$3.00 (includes postage & handling). ©1989 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and Bell & Howell, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, OH 44691. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322. For subscription problems call 800-274-6686.

CORRESPONDENCE

Class Wars

To the editors:

Your editorial "The New Class" (August 28) expresses some curious notions about what makes teaching a profession. First, you describe incentives to encourage students to teach as actions that would "make teaching less professional." I fail to see how attracting exceptional students or experienced executives into a field would make it "less professional." Indeed, this could only enhance the status of the profession—regardless of how long these students continue to teach.

This does not mean that every bright student would make a fine teacher. Teaching requires a particular skill—the ability to inspire students and impart knowledge. Yet you argue that the Carnegie assessment should "emphasize knowledge of subject matter over teaching technique." It is the application of this technique that makes teaching a profession. Carnegie is not preparing a multiple-choice exam, but a battery of exercises to see how well teachers function in a classroom. "Technique" is exactly what should be tested if we are to view teaching as a true profession and not just as something that could be done by any "Jeopardy" winner walking in off the street.

SHERWOOD BOEHLERT
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

TNR makes an excellent case for adopting a national board certification scheme, but you fail to note that the current supply of teachers far outstrips the demand for their services in many areas. I graduated Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude in political science and Soviet studies, completed a graduate certification program, and have glowing recommendations, yet I am unable to find work after having applied to 20 different districts. The reasons are twofold: the aforementioned oversupply of teachers in my field (social studies), and (as two principals have explained to me) the requirement of ability to coach an extracurricular sport. I am committed to teaching and will continue to look for work in my chosen profession, but would I advise bright young college students to follow in my footsteps? Definitely not.

JONI J. SLEMMONS
Olathe, Kansas

No Apologies for Terrorism

To the editors:

TNR implied in "Kidnapping and Peace" (August 21) that I am an apologist for Shiite fanatic terrorists. That is not my position. I am a victim of terrorism. Any victim of terrorism—insurgent, or state conducted or sponsored—knows of its inhuman cruelty and unacceptable savagery. Insurgent terrorists (the kind who kidnapped me and probably most of the Americans in Lebanon) are not freedom fighters, as some like to style themselves. They are cowards, thugs who kill innocent people and cripple their families. There is nothing brave, courageous, or righteous about that. It is criminal.

We are on opposite sides on some issues in which terrorism has played a role. I have suggested more than once that the way to develop an enlightened strategy to fight terrorism is to get a good fix on the causes that motivate it. But comprehension of the causes does not necessarily mean acceptance. Even if it does, it should never indicate ratification of the means.

I know there is a fanatic side to terrorists. I spent nearly a year with some. This is not to say that they have no real political, social, and economic complaints. The aim of those who would deny the existence of rational causes—even though we might not agree with them—would seem to be to avoid coming to grips with them constructively.

JERRY LEVIN
Washington, D.C.

No Pain, No Gain

To the editors:

Gregg Easterbrook ("The Sky Is Always Falling," August 21) hilariously sends up economic commentators' disposition to gloom no matter which way the figures move. One reason for this is that Wall Street analysts on whom journalists depend have an institutional bias to gloom. Few clients lose money when the market surges up, even if they could have made more had they known. But lots lose money when the market turns down, and they may be angry with their advisers for not warning them. An analyst who wants to keep his job worries more about missing a downturn than an upturn, so he will always tend to pessimism.

JOHN PEET
Washington, D.C.

The Milken Fan Club

To the editors:

On March 31 both the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* had a full-page ad in

defense of Michael Milken, signed by 88 prominent business executives, which Mark Hosenball mentions in "The Friends of Michael Milken" (August 28). Milken deserves a fair trial to be sure, but anyone who has read *The Predator's Ball* would come to the conclusion that his efforts have been primarily directed toward his own interest. These appear to have been personal, financial manipulative power to the nth degree and a shocking amount of pure unadulterated greed. It is hard to believe that these business people really think Milken is so outstanding a human being. One wonders how much planned public relations and arm twisting were involved in developing the ad.

One wonders too, about these American business leaders when they say, "Mike has always performed according to the highest standards of professionalism, honesty, integrity and ethical conduct." Doesn't ethics include such issues as an interest in the many workers discharged in the wake of these mergers and reorganizations? Shouldn't business be judged by attention to long-term research and development programs, even though in many mergers R&D is cut back or eliminated for short-term financial gain?

I wonder whether most of the executives who signed that letter will be proud of their signatures in a few years.

HARRY KAHN
New York, New York

Designer Flaws

To the editors:

The architect for the National Air & Space Museum was Helmut, Obata & Kassabaum, not I. M. Pei, as cited by Herbert Muschamp in his excellent article on the Holocaust Museum ("How Buildings Remember," August 28).

MICHAEL J. CROSBIE
Essex, Connecticut

P.S. from the editors:

And Maya Lin, not Maya Ling, designed the Vietnam Memorial. Sorry.

Average Ratings

To the editors:

In Notebook (August 21) you point out the manner in which other periodicals misstate Japanese capital gains tax rates, but you simultaneously commit a similar common error in regard to American tax rates. You comment that "America's rate (absurdly) drops to 28 percent at very high levels." This is technically correct in terms of marginal rates, but incorrect in terms of actual average tax rate paid. People at a 33 percent marginal rate are

continued on page 41

Now Available
In Four Languages!

The BBC Language Course for Children

Only Seven Years Old*... and She's Already Speaking French!



Give Your Child
That Critical
Early Advantage!

Now Available
In French,
Spanish,
Italian or
German!

It's a scientific fact...and one of Nature's marvels. During the early years of childhood, the human mind is best programmed for learning a language — any language.

That's why children learn so much more easily than adults, even *before* being able to read. They learn the same way they learned English — naturally — by listening, seeing, and imitating. In the international world our children will compete in — where so many Europeans and Asians start a foreign language early — a second language will be essential. Vital for competing with polished and accomplished peers.

Sample ages for beginning a second language**

Japan	Age 8	France	Pre-School
Sweden	Age 7	Spain	Pre-School
Austria	Age 8	Canada	Pre-School

** Ages represent top schools and programs; compulsory language education usually begins several years later.

From the BBC, World Leaders in Language Education

For the first time ever in the U.S.A., your child can learn French, Spanish, Italian or German using the most successful Language Course for Children ever created!

Muzzy, a unique video learning program, is produced by the BBC — the world's foremost teachers of language. Specifically designed for children (pre-school through age 12), *Muzzy* uses color animation, enchanting songs, and charming, involving characters (including *Muzzy* himself), and teaches children to absorb a new language the same way they learned English.

It's so easy and so much fun. In fact, most kids love to watch or listen over and over again, just like their favorite TV shows!

Complete Language Learning Course!

Everything needed for a child to master beginning French, Spanish, Italian or German is included. Four video cassettes. Two audio cassettes. An activity book and an excellent parent's instruction guide plus answer book. All in attractive, durable storage cases.

Through *listen-and-learn* and *see-and-learn*, your child will begin speaking a foreign language from the very first day! He or she can learn alone, or you can help and learn the language, too!

No Risk Guarantee!

Here is perhaps the greatest gift you will ever give your child...a second language. And at an astonishingly affordable price of just \$145*, payable in four credit card installments. And there's no risk! If you and your child are not absolutely delighted, you may return the course within 30 days for a full refund. Order today from Early Advantage, 47 Richards Avenue, Norwalk, Conn. 06857.

* Plus \$4.75 shipping/handling per cassette.

Now
Available
for the
First Time
in the
U.S.A.!

By exclusive arrangement with the British Broadcasting Co.
A program proven with thousands of European youngsters.
And the whole family can learn the language, too!

* Proven results for pre-school through age 12.

© 1989 MBI

The BBC Language Course for Children

Early Advantage
47 Richards Avenue
Norwalk, Conn 06857

Satisfaction
Guaranteed

For Fastest Service — Call Toll-Free: 1-800-367-4534

Yes! Please send me *The BBC Language Course(s) for Children* I have indicated. I understand only VHS format is available.

(Please check appropriate items.)

Language: ☐ FRENCH ☐ SPANISH ☐ ITALIAN ☐ GERMAN

Name _____ PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Signature _____ (All orders subject to acceptance.)

Charge each of four monthly \$37.44* installments to my credit card:
☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ Diners Club ☐ American Express

Credit Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____

☐ I prefer not to use my credit card and will pay by check. Enclosed is my deposit of \$50* for each course. I will pay the balance of \$99.75* as billed in three monthly installments.

*Includes one-time shipping/handling charge of \$4.75. CT residents add 8%; TN residents add 7-1/4% sales tax. Allow 2 to 4 weeks for shipment (4 to 6 weeks for German).

372-8481

UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Nobody Brews The News Like Morning Edition.

If the daily roll call of disasters is getting a little stale, take a fresh approach to the news with Morning Edition from National Public Radio.

Morning Edition is a stimulating blend of the day's most important stories, news analysis, sports, business,

and features on science and the arts.

And with Morning Edition, you'll get the morning news with things you won't find anywhere else on the dial . . . intelligence, depth, and whimsy.

So get up on the Morning

Edition side of bed. Before long, you won't want to start your day any other way.

**morning
edition®**

Drink It In...This Is Radio News The Way It's Meant To Be Brewed.

Check local listings for your public radio station or call NPR at (202) 822-2323.

National Public Radio® News

OCTOBER 2, 1989

KNOCK KNOCK

"Let my people go." That's what Moses said to Pharaoh. What the United States and its allies have been saying to the contemporary pharaohs is "Let *your* people go." And they have begun to do just that. Suddenly there is a panic throughout the West. How in the world are we going to cope with hundreds of thousands, and soon perhaps millions, of men and women, young and old, who will be free to leave the Communist countries from which hitherto there had been no exit? For 28 years the Berlin Wall has symbolized that cruel policy of sealed borders. We in the West, of course, made the most of it politically, taunting the red regimes for having to keep their subjects from voting with their feet.

But our indignation was safe and easy, since our bluff was not called. In Asia we have let masses of wretched escapees from Marxism-in-power languish in camps, not only homeless but stateless, which (as Hannah Arendt has shown) also means utterly rightless. Most of the Eastern and Central Europeans probably will fare rather better than the Vietnamese and the Cambodians did. They are white, after all. Still, dispossession does not yet evoke much practical sympathy in Europe. Notice how little notice has been taken of the Turks of Bulgaria, who did not leave voluntarily but have been expelled—300,000 of them in recent months—penniless, before our very eyes in these very days into an indifferent world.

This journal has always maintained that America should open its doors ever more widely to those who aspire to be Americans. Perhaps we can no longer have the completely open borders we once had, but at the very least current immigration and refugee ceilings can be doubled and redoubled. We favor a more open door not simply as a way of relieving the distress among other peoples and in other societies. We favor it because we believe that many of the distinguishing

strengths of this country derive from its foreign strains, and that new immigrants can contribute to America just as past immigrants have done.

Alas, the drift of public policy is not in that direction. To be sure, the United States has moved decisively in recent decades away from the invidious ethnic and racial preferences that governed early immigration practices. And during the last quarter century we have also been far more responsive to political refugees than other societies. But immigrants are limited to about 600,000 a year, with a complicated point system used for deciding who is most worthy of admission. Refugees—those deemed to be fleeing political oppression, as opposed to merely seeking economic opportunity—are a separate category. Last year we admitted 76,000 refugees. We have admitted 75,000 already this year. President Bush proposes increasing that to 125,000 next year, but is requesting enough money for only 84,000.

But the world is awash with refugees—an estimated 14 million of them. Some are victims of unbelievably brutal governments; others are the human refuse of routine economic and even nutritional want. Asking whether their motivation is "economic" or "political" is to make an absurd distinction: impossible as a practical matter, and morally irrelevant in any event. Often these causes of collective and individual misery go together, as in Haiti. Nevertheless, when a Haitian family risks its life to come to America in an old boat and is apprehended on the seas, our laws do not recognize them as refugees.

The category of refugee is narrowly defined. It is also arbitrarily defined. For a while Cubans were axiomatic refugees. Within numerical limits so were Indochinese. Since we don't admit everybody, choices are always made, hard choices. Perhaps necessary choices. The choices are especially difficult this year. There is the



budget constraint: refugees receive federal subsidies for resettlement. But the sheer number of refugees is what really overwhelms. The intensified repression in China alone is bound to create a wave of new refugees that will affect the fate of other refugees and would-be refugees. In a world as nasty as ours the status of refugee—the moral claim that attaches to it—is always relative.

While the Bush administration tries to create a fair refugee policy, Congress has passed legislation that would grant Jews and evangelical Christians from the Soviet Union virtually automatic classification as admissible refugees. The State Department estimates that in 1990 at least 100,000 Soviet Jews would apply and qualify. Given the severity of the world refugee situation, this legislation, promoted by Senator Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey and Representative Bruce Morrison of Connecticut, both Democrats, is nothing more than special pleading.

With the dramatic changes taking place under *glasnost* and *perestroika*, there is reason to question whether any residents of the Soviet Union wanting to leave the country should still be considered refugees. Treating them as such may be close to an obsolete concept. (They always can apply as immigrants, going through the arcane and time-consuming procedures just like everyone else.) But in the case of Soviet Jews there is a second consideration. Those who are allowed out are not in the position of having no place to go. Israel was always willing—eager—to take them in. In fact, part of the romance that surrounded Soviet Jewish “refuseniks,” those who couldn’t get out, was that they wanted to “go home.” Even those who settled elsewhere (and 90 percent in recent years have come to America) left the Soviet Union under the legal fiction that they were going to Israel. Any Soviet Jew who can get an exit visa can still go to Israel, a democratic society where he can lead a free, if somewhat exasperating, life. In this sense also no Soviet Jew is properly a refugee. He may prefer the United States, but he is far better off than the hundreds of thousands with no place to go.

There is nothing inherently hypocritical about America’s insistence that everyone should have the right to leave his country, just because we cannot (or at least do not) make room for everyone who exercises that right. Nevertheless, more room ought to be made. While most continue to be excluded, however, decency requires reserving precious spaces for those who have no place else to go.

NOTEBOOK

MOOSES YOU CAN USE: Bovine somatotropin is a genetically engineered drug, on the verge of approval by the FDA, that can increase cows’ production of milk by up to 25 percent. Safeway, Kroger, and three other supermarket chains have announced their intention to

keep such milk out of their stores. Ben and Jerry’s, the upscale ice cream maker, has gone even further. It is putting notices on its cartons urging that bovine somatotropin be banned. Although there is some attempt to gin up concern about potential side effects of the milk (which has been consumed without harm by millions in tests since 1985), the real concern is that the drug will do exactly what it is supposed to do: increase milk production, thereby imperiling small dairy farmers. “SAVE FAMILY FARMS,” headlines the Ben & Jerry’s carton. Since Ben & Jerry’s cartons and THE NEW REPUBLIC probably have a large overlapping readership, we want to make our position clear: it is insane to ban a product on the mere grounds that it makes milk production more efficient—that is, makes milk cheaper. Poor people spend a disproportionate amount of their income on food, including milk. What sense is there in putting science on hold so that milk consumers can subsidize milk producers? If some “family farms” (in reality, businesses typically worth several hundred thousand dollars) are no longer economic as a result of bovine somatotropin, that is nature’s little way of saying that life moves on. Churning ice cream at home on a summer’s evening is also a wonderful American tradition. Should we ban commercial distributors like Ben & Jerry’s in order to preserve it?

THEY’RE EVERYWHERE:

Drug Rings Turn Border Into a Vast Route to U.S.

—*New York Times*, August 27, page one, column one

Past Neptune, Voyager Spots Still More Rings

—same paper, same day, same page, column 3
(thanks to Mart Manitzas, New York, New York)

BBROADCAST VIEWS: Pleased as we are about the fuss stirred up by our story two weeks ago about the financial arrangements for “Days of Rage,” the Palestinian propaganda film recently shown on PBS (“Film Flam” by Steven Emerson, TNR, September 18 & 25), we have to laugh a bit at the public broadcasting etiquette that the film’s producer, Jo Franklin-Trout, seems to have broken. Our story, in essence, was that Franklin-Trout had a promise of financial support from the Arab-American Cultural Foundation, in seeming violation of a PBS rule that documentaries must be funded by disinterested parties. Rules are rules, but PBS might be more stimulating if its rules aspired to rough balance of views rather than bland disinterestedness. Furthermore, the alleged standard of disinterestedness doesn’t even begin to apply to PBS’s non-political shows, for which funding is sought from interested parties with a zeal that would embarrass the so-called commercial networks. For example, PBS’s Boston affiliate, WGBH, which produces the popular “This Old House” home repair series, recently fired the host, Bob Vila. Vila’s offense was doing commercials for home-repair products. But the

problem wasn't that Vila was too "commercial." The problem was that Vila's efforts were interfering with public television's own efforts to get "underwriting" from rival companies. As explained in the *New York Times*, after Vila endorsed Rickel Home Centers, "This Old House" lost its "underwriting" (don't call it a commercial!) from Home Depot Inc. Out went Mr. Vila, a martyr to non-commerce.

ONE-DAY LONG-TERM:

Little long-term damage to career seen

—*Boston Globe* (about Barney Frank), August 26

Frank's career jeopardized, analysts say

—same paper, next day

(thanks to Robert Goldberg, Ann Arbor, Michigan)

NOTHING'S IMPOSSIBLE:

Tourists! They're impossible — they still love New York

—*New York Post*, August 20

Fewer Travelers Put New York on Itineraries

—*New York Times*, same day

(thanks to Tom Carroll, Clifton Park, New York)

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

"A few minutes later, [Pete] Rose was out the door, into his Mercedes, and gone." —*USA Today*, August 25

"Pete Rose . . . jumped in a Porsche and left for, one presumes, his next souvenir-selling show." —*Florida Today*, same today, er, day

(thanks to Mrs. William Greiling, Cocoa Beach, Florida)

LAST GASP: The Senate Appropriations Committee has voted to ban smoking on all domestic airline flights. Smoking is a disgusting, suicidal habit—but far from the most disgusting thing people routinely do on airplanes. And the fact that it is suicidal is really not the Senate Appropriations Committee's business. A nicotine addict may be a fool, but he or she is a human being nonetheless, and one who may find tobacco deprivation over the course of a long airplane flight genuinely agonizing. (Smoking is already banned on flights of under two hours.) What justification is there for imposing this agony? Intolerance of smoking in public has gone way beyond any genuine health concern about the effect of ambient smoke on non-smokers. And reforming smokers for their own good is not a legitimate use of the state's police power (as opposed to its powers of taxation and moral leadership). By the way, all this has nothing to do with the fact that TNR accepts cigarette ads. To repeat: cigarettes are disgusting, and cause cancer, and everyone should stop buying them. OK? But people have the right to ignore TNR's advice.

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

AVOIDING TROUBLE

By Fred Barnes

Almost from the day of the Exxon oil spill last March 24, Alaska's two Republican senators were bent on getting President Bush to visit their state. They lobbied him relentlessly. Senator Ted Stevens argued that Bush should inspect the environmental damage and cleanup firsthand. "As commander in chief, he ought to see if the job was done right." Bush, always eager to please members of Congress, agreed. A trip to Alaska was tentatively scheduled for the third week of September, along with visits to South Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming. Then the White House got the willies. Bush had been zinged for reacting too slowly to the spill, but he'd escaped serious political injury. Why risk a visit now to the site of one of the worst environmental disasters of all time? Pictures of Bush amid oily residue would be awful. "He'd just get beat up in the press," a White House official said. Bush postponed the Alaska trip.

That decision wasn't momentous, but it was typical. Bush avoids trouble at all cost. True, all political leaders like to stay out of harm's way. With Bush, it's a fetish. He and John Sununu, the White House chief of staff, devote considerable time to trouble aversion. Bush urges members of Congress to call him directly with their problems, even small ones. Some, like Republican Representative Bill Archer of Texas, call often. Bush's zeal has been rewarded—he's popular and rarely generates trouble for himself—but there's a downside. His leadership is tepid and reactive. His boldest policies (cutting conventional forces in Europe, the anti-drug program) were forced on him. Left to his own devices, Bush would rather be safe than bold, platitudinous than controversial, liked than feared. He knows what works for him.

Sununu says he adheres to what he calls "the acorn theory of management." This amounts to identifying problems when they're small, and resolving them. If you don't do this, says Sununu, problems will grow "into oak trees." Sununu has instructed administration officials to bring policy disagreements, personnel disputes, turf fights, etc., to him when they're small clashes, not full-blown crises. "It means you deal with a lot more problems on a daily basis, but they're at a lot lower magnitude," he says. Sununu brokered differences over jurisdiction between drug czar William Bennett and Attorney General Richard Thornburgh before they prompted major battles. He

did the same on several trade issues.

The White House bills Bush's drug program as the most significant initiative of his first year. But I'm not sure he'd have named a drug czar, pieced together a comprehensive plan, and given a national televised speech on drugs if it hadn't been for a Democrat, Joe Biden. Against the wishes of the Reagan administration last year, Biden pushed through legislation creating the position of drug czar and requiring that a national drug strategy be issued six months after the czar takes office. That date turned out to be September 5. In his speech, Bush acted as if the whole thing were his idea. "This is the first time since taking the oath of office that I felt an issue was so important, so threatening that it warranted talking directly with you, the American people," he said.

The 23-minute speech was uninspiring. It had no memorable lines, having been stripped, a Bush adviser said, of "buzzwords, some phrases, anecdotes." Bush didn't broach the two most controversial issues in his drug plan. One is his ban on imported assault guns. Defending it would arouse the gun lobby. The other is the crackdown on casual users of drugs, many of them middle-class. Bennett says they are indispensable in keeping drug dealers in business, and the strategy he drafted for Bush aims to make sure they face punishment. The closest the president came to mentioning them was when he asked, rhetorically, "Who's responsible? Let me tell you straight out. Everyone who uses drugs."

Bush's play-it-safe strategy paid off politically. Hours before he delivered the speech, he'd already taken the high ground from Democrats. That afternoon, he invited congressional leaders to the Cabinet Room for a briefing on his new drug policy. In the White House driveway after the meeting, Democratic Representative Charles Rangel of New York noisily advocated a tax increase to finance the drug war. Marlin Fitzwater, the White House press secretary, watched the press conference out his window and live on CNN at the same time. He rushed into the Oval Office to tell Bush.

"We won it," he said. "The Democrats are for raising taxes." "Really?" Bush said. "What about the substance [of the plan]?" Fitzwater told him, "They didn't deal with that."

To avoid trouble, Bush is willing to suffer humiliation. His policy of working through the Organization of American States has failed to oust Gen. Manuel Noriega from control in Panama. Noriega defied Bush and installed a lackey as Panamanian president on September 1, not the fellow who won the election. The OAS did nothing, yet Bush said he still favors multilateral diplomacy. An American commando raid to grab Noriega and bring him to trial in Florida on drug charges hasn't been ruled out by Bush. But it would be risky, so don't hold your breath.

The president has a rationale for caution on Noriega,

and maybe he's right. If Noriega were snatched, it would set off what a senior Bush aide calls "the Yankee go home syndrome." That, in turn, would make it politically impossible for the leaders of Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia to seek American help in the drug war. There would be "a climate where U.S. assistance would not be welcome." Just as bad, the administration would lose support for pressuring the Sandinistas to conduct a fair presidential election in Nicaragua next February. The United States would be a pariah again in Latin America. And what if Bush tried a commando raid but it failed to get Noriega? He'd be a pariah and a laughingstock both.

Bush's inability to topple Noriega made him vulnerable to a practical joke on his vacation in August in Kennebunkport. This was the vacation in which, day after day for three weeks, the running story in the press was that he couldn't catch a fish. On Labor Day weekend, Bush invited reporters to a picnic on the front lawn of his house. During the party, Jim Miklaszewski of NBC approached Bush with a serious look on his face. He said he was sorry to interrupt a social event, but there'd been an important development in Central America. Bush was intrigued. What happened in Central America? he asked. Well, said Miklaszewski, Noriega caught a fish.

In dealing with Congress, Bush's tack is to be inoffensive. Bipartisanship suits him fine, since he's willing to split the difference on most issues. He endorsed the Americans with Disabilities Act, which is supposed to ban discrimination against the handicapped, though Democrats made few concessions. The White House figured the measure was going to pass anyway. Earlier, he compromised on aid to the *contras*. Congress was unlikely to approve military aid, so Bush didn't ask for it. The last thing he wants is an uphill fight.

On his drug strategy, Bush got snippy with Democrats in Congress for trying to jack up the price tag. But don't let that fool you. Bush wants to be friends with them, especially Dan Rostenkowski, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. Bush declined to push for a cut in the tax rate on capital gains that didn't have Rostenkowski's blessing. He was also deaf to pleas from business lobbyists for repeal of Section 89 of the Internal Revenue Code, a complicated measure that requires employers to provide the same amount of health insurance to low-paid employees as high-paid ones. As long as Rostenkowski wanted to save Section 89, so did Bush. And despite protests by the elderly, the president refused for months to call for reform or repeal of the catastrophic health insurance program. Rostenkowski wanted to preserve it.

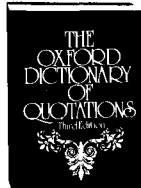
Bush jumped ship on September 7 and now favors a cut in the catastrophic premiums paid by the elderly. He switched only when the trouble caused by sticking with Rostenkowski outweighed the trouble that might come from bucking him. I'll concede that Bush is clever at

Tres Libros por Tres Dolares and a Farewell to Commitment. No Bull.



*165. The story of an artist who must confront the troubling memories of her childhood.

Hardcover: \$24.95
QPB: \$9.50



*482. This latest edition of the famous dictionary has 40,000 memorable quotations.

Hardcover: \$45
QPB: \$18.95



601. The evolution of beliefs throughout history. Illustrated.

Hardcover: \$29.95
QPB: \$12.95



*330. An award-winning food writer offers more than 600 recipes for your microwave oven.

Hardcover: \$19.95
QPB: \$9.95



*220. A stunning novel of love, betrayal and survival set in 20th-century North Dakota.

Hardcover: \$17.95
QPB: \$7.95



Ernest Hemingway



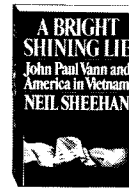
169. Fast-paced creepy fun from the author of the best-selling *Vampire Lestat*.

QPB: \$9.95



182. Moyers talks about everything from morality to science with notable individuals.

Hardcover: \$29.95
QPB: \$15.95



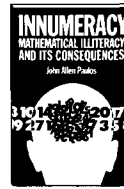
*309. A disturbing biography of an army officer who personified America's presence in Vietnam.

Hardcover: \$24.95
QPB: \$12.95



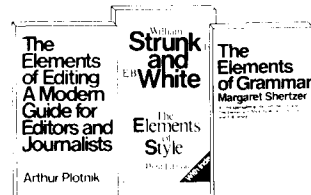
495. Biting, hilarious essays from the crown prince of "gonzo" journalism.

Hardcover: \$19.95
QPB: \$9.95



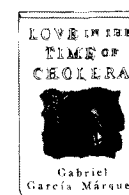
*335. What happens when well-educated people are ignorant of basic mathematics.

Hardcover: \$16.95
QPB: \$8.95



109. A special QPB trio: *The Elements of Style*, *The Elements of Grammar*, *The Elements of Editing*.

3-volume set
QPB: \$10.95



427. The Nobel laureate's latest fiction charts the course of a 50-year romantic triangle.

Hardcover: \$18.95
QPB: \$7.95



*321. Stephen Hawking offers a convincing big picture of the origins of the cosmos.

Hardcover: \$18.95
QPB: \$9.50



*630. This biography follows Churchill from his political exile to his appointment as prime minister.

Hardcover: \$24.95
QPB: \$12.95



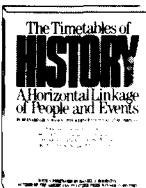
472. A new filled-to-bursting collection of over 500 hysterical "Far Side" cartoons.

QPB: \$8.95



*793. A definitive one-volume collection including seven previously unpublished tales.

Hardcover: \$22.50
QPB: \$10.95



267. The story of civilization in a unique chart format.

Hardcover: \$29.95
QPB: \$15.95



*716. From the pages of *Rolling Stone*, a documentary of the past 20 years.

Hardcover: \$24.95
QPB: \$12.95



297. Soothing therapeutic techniques. 150 graphic photographs.

QPB: \$9.50

*QPB Exclusive: The only softcover edition now available.

OK. Send me 3 books for 3 bucks. No commitment. No bull.

Quality Paperback Book Club, P.O. Box 8804, Camp Hill, PA 17011-8804
Please enroll me in QPB and send me the 3 choices I've listed below, billing me only \$1 each, plus shipping and handling charges. I understand that I am not required to buy another book. You will send me the *QPB Review* (if my account is in good standing) for at least six months. If I have not bought at least one book in any six-month period, you may cancel my membership.

9-16
Indicate by number your 3 choices:

Name (Please print clearly) QBI2740-1
Address
City State Zip



Quality
Paperback
Book
Club

Prices are generally higher in Canada. © 1989 Quality Paperback Book Club. All orders subject to approval.

How QPB Membership Works.

Selection: Each *Review* lists a new Selection. If you want it, do nothing—it will be shipped automatically. If you want another book or no book at all, complete the Reply Form always enclosed and return it by the specified date. (A shipping and handling charge is added to each shipment.)

Return Privilege: If the *QPB Review* is delayed and you receive the Selection without having had 10 days to notify us, you may return it for credit.

Cancellations: You may cancel membership at any time by notifying QPB. We may cancel your membership if you elect not to buy at least one book in any six-month period.

playing the game of congressional politics. Maybe there will be long-term benefits, like passage of a capital gains cut he likes. But he's tinkering, not leading.

There's a postscript to Bush's decision to cancel his trip to Alaska. To soothe the Alaska senators, Bush assigned Vice President Dan Quayle to stop off in Alaska when he flies to the Far East in mid-September. "That's what it means to be vice president," said a White House official. Quayle wasn't given the option of saying no.

It's great, unfortunately.

WHAT CRACK IS LIKE

By Jefferson Morley

"Using it even once can make a person crave cocaine for as long as they live." —Peter Jennings, "ABC World News Tonight," September 8

When it comes to crack, politicians and pundits literally do not know what they are talking about. Most of the journalists covering the so-called "war on drugs" have at least tried marijuana. So have many of the rugged young officials now in charge of said hostilities. Both pencil pushers and paper pushers have been known to snort the occasional mound of cocaine. Virtually all came of age before the dawn of zero tolerance. Even heroin is not utterly unknown to the opinion and policy classes.

But crack is something else. Probably no one making our government's drug policy has ever smoked a rock of crack cocaine. Nor has anyone who regularly reports or comments in the media on the ravages of crack capitalism. Now, I wouldn't argue that you have to smoke crack to understand the war on drugs—any more than you have to kill someone to understand the war in Vietnam. And I certainly wouldn't argue that crack isn't hazardous or that anyone should try it. Having been through the experience, though, may facilitate a certain realism about the conflict in question.

Crack is a pleasure both powerful and elusive. Smoke a rock and, for the next 20 minutes, you will likely appreciate sensuous phenomena ranging from MTV to neon lights to oral sex with renewed urgency. After your 20 minutes is up, you will have a chemical aftertaste in your mouth and, in all likelihood, the sneaking desire to smoke another rock—to see what that was really all about. Just one more. You'll want to pick up a \$25 rock, which can be split into four or five smaller rocks. (If you want to know

where to buy crack, just tune in to shows like "Gerald" or "City Under Siege"—Washington's nightly local TV report on the drug crisis—for detailed instructions.)

As you smoke your second rock, it may strike you that the crack high combines the best aspects of marijuana and cocaine. The pleasure of pot is not just a high, but a buzz; smoke a joint and space out. Cocaine, in contrast, is a clear high, a stimulant to sociality; do a line and get into some serious play or some pleasurable work. Crack is both spacey and intense. It has the head rush of marijuana or amyl nitrate with the clarity induced by a noseful of powder cocaine.

On the third rock, you may notice that your world looks just fine, as do various of the women (or men) in it. Reality isn't real and all that was formerly a possibility is now on the verge of actuality. You'll want to turn up the music and maybe your sexual aggression quotient. You'll gain new insight into why crack is so popular among women.

You may find yourself in the company of experienced crackheads as you smoke your fourth rock. You may start to notice other aspects of the crack experience. An individualistic drug, crack is often enjoyed in silence. The silence ends when that last sliver of rock is gone and you want to go out and find another \$25 rock. When you're back outside prowling the lunar landscape of post-Reagan urban America at two in the morning with your high fading and your heartbeat racing, you'll begin to learn that crack is both a mental and a material phenomenon. You want your next rock, you want to get off, get out of this world—or at least transform it for a few minutes. You can be a moral tourist in the land of crack and still get a sense of how the drug can make sick sense to demoralized people. If all you have in life is bad choices, crack may not be the most unpleasant of them.

Even at two in the morning, you can find a guy who's got a rock. But he won't sell to you because he thinks a white guy must be a cop. Or he wants you to give him your money and he'll go get the rock from his friend over there. (Yeah, right.) So he finally gets you a rock but chips off a little for himself. You get high and before you know it you're coming down again, thinking maybe crack combines the worst of other drugs. Like weed, it's stupefying; like coke, it's conducive to paranoia.

After my night of crack, I went home and fell into a light sleep with the lights on. I feared that an air conditioner was going to fall on my head. I woke up tired, alert, still a little buzzed, filled with an urgent desire to get to work to make up for the night's decadence.

I took an unsatisfactory shower. I mused about the weird apparatchiks who wage war on drugs and who claim vindication in the fact that drug use is declining among the middle class. They are the ones, I

thought melodramatically, who should—who must!—smoke crack. Before it is too late, I muttered, dragging a comb through my hair.

What if there were a drug (I inquired of the mirror) that could chemically induce feelings of upper-middle-classness. It would be attractive to the poor, and wildly popular among those who had no prayer of ever achieving that comfortable station in life. And it would be despised by people who had worked long, hard years to obtain that same mental state without resorting to the drug. It would be popular, cheap, and the cause of anti-social behavior. It would be a lot like crack.

I put on my clothes and thought, for obscure reasons, of a yuppie acquaintance. I am sure she has never tried crack. "I just bought a CD player," this young woman announced proudly to her sister one day when it was still morning in America, "Do you know of any music I should listen to?" Yuppies are just the crackheads of consumerism, I thought, their CDs just so many rocks of consumptive, sensuous pleasure. My mood was improving already. Crack was a parody of Reaganism, I concluded, a brief high with a bad aftertaste and untold bodily damage.

I flushed the toilet and straightened my tie. Had Bill Bennett ever smoked crack, I wondered? Probably not. I was no longer high, just daydreaming. I remembered meeting a University of Texas alum, and her bemused expression when I asked her if she thought Bill Bennett had smoked marijuana at UT in the late 1960s. "Well, obviously not enough," she said.

The crack had worn off entirely, and I sat down to write an article about the drug problem.

JEFFERSON MORLEY, former associate editor of TNR, is Washington editor of the *Nation*.

From kissing babies to pissing in bottles.

JAR WARS

By William Saletan

A couple of weeks ago, five top officials in Representative John Conyers's mayoral campaign opened their bladders to the Detroit media. Conyers's former media consultant, Sam Riddle, had scheduled a press conference to accuse Conyers's staff of drug abuse. After all five aides passed the test, Riddle applauded the results and hypocritically told the *Detroit News*, "There are too many issues in Detroit for us to be caught up in the

mire of whose jar is the cleanest."

Jar wars are back. Three years ago, to dramatize their "Just Say No" campaign, President Reagan and Vice President Bush led the way to the water closet, and dozens of candidates for lower office followed. This year Bush is riding the drug issue again, and politicians campaigning in four major cities have already submitted to drug tests. In 1986 some politicians resisted this nonsense. This year resistance has disappeared. Drug testing has become almost a standard part of political campaigns.

In Florida three years ago, Senator Paula Hawkins put her whole staff through drug tests, but challenger Bob Graham declined to follow suit—and won. In Massachusetts congressional candidate Joe Kennedy also declined a drug-test challenge and won. In South Carolina Senator Ernest Hollings smacked down a similar demand by offering to take a drug test if his opponent would take an IQ test. In Kentucky Representative Chris Perkins refused to prove his purity for challenger Jim Polley. Perkins joked that Polley should take an HIV test and a polygraph test to prove he'd been honest about his drug test; Polley promptly agreed to comply. Representative Tommy Robinson used the same polygraph joke to dismiss a challenge in Arkansas.

On the other hand, Georgia congressional candidate Julian Bond lost his lead and the election after refusing to join opponent John Lewis in taking a test. In South Carolina the same fate befell Lieutenant Governor Mike Daniel in his bid for governor. Daniel's running mate was less proud. After submitting to the test, he won Daniel's job.

Last fall in Virginia, Republican Senate nominee Maurice Dawkins announced that he had given three blood samples to a hospital for drug testing and challenged his opponent, Governor Chuck Robb, to do the same. Within hours Robb, the overwhelming favorite, submitted a urine sample to another hospital and was declared clean. By 1989 standards, Robb was slow on the draw. In St. Louis this spring, mayoral candidate Michael Roberts challenged incumbent Vincent Schoemehl to take a drug test. Roberts announced that he had already taken a test and was awaiting the results. In a well-planned counterpunch, Schoemehl immediately released copies of his own clean evaluation based on a drug test he had secretly taken three weeks earlier.

Washington, D.C., won't elect its next mayor until 1990, but drug-testing season began two years beforehand. When news emerged last December about drug-related antics among Mayor Marion Barry's friends, critics proposed that he take a test. While Barry hemmed and hawed, City Council Chairman David Clarke, preparing to run for Barry's job, took the test and promptly released the results to the press. A few weeks ago, when the *Washington Post* asked four mayoral contenders whether they had used drugs, Clarke declined to answer, but offered to take

a drug test "anytime the *Post* wants me to."

In Atlanta former Mayor Maynard Jackson spent this year battling for his old job against Fulton County Commissioner Michael Lomax. First Lomax released results of several drug tests he had taken. Like Schoemehl, Lomax said he had tucked away the results "in case it became an issue." Jackson responded by offering to meet any challenger for a drug-testing duel "on the steps of City Hall in 30 minutes."

Conyers's campaign chairman told reporters that he and other Conyers officials were "philosophically opposed" to the drug test but took it anyway just to quash the issue. "The conventional wisdom now is to acquiesce, to get it out of the arena right away," explains one GOP consultant. But in jar wars, like nuclear wars, everybody loses. Take Atlanta. In 1986 rumors of drug abuse by Bond provided at least a bare context for making testing an issue. In 1989 even that basis was lacking, but both candidates volunteered for the test anyway. Several other local officeholders have also begrudgingly taken the test to immunize themselves against suspicion. Local consultants say widespread capitulation has made the test, in effect, a mandatory ritual. Elsewhere consultants say more and more candidates are keeping test results at hand, just in case they're needed.

Every politician who takes a drug test justifies it as a way to send a message to the public, particularly to the young. But the trouble is that it sends the wrong message: if you won't take the test, you're suspect. Not only are your agenda and your political record irrelevant, but so is your conduct, which is the only defensible basis for requiring a drug test of a political candidate. The only way to reverse this trend is to reverse the test. The message from voters to politicians must be: if you value substance above stunts, and if you respect yourself and your constituents, offer us your platform and your record, not your urine.

WILLIAM SALETAN is the editor of the Hotline.

'Constructive engagement' with the Soviets.

WAITING FOR WYOMING

By Patrick Glynn

As the date of the Wyoming "mini-summit" approached, the crucial question seemed to be whether Gorbachev would crack down on the growing nationalist movements in the Baltic states. On August 26 the Soviet Communist Party Cen-

tral Committee issued its darkest admonition yet to the Baltic peoples, warning that "the consequences could be disastrous for these peoples if the nationalists manage to achieve their goals." The statement, recalling language used by the Kremlin over Poland in 1981, warned that the Baltic peoples were being pushed into an "abyss" by nationalist leaders and spoke ominously of the possibility of "civil conflict" and "mass street clashes" that would call into question "the very viability of the Baltic nations." The Kremlin urged the Balts to recognize "the full extent and reality of impending disaster."

In the face of what amounted to a bullying ultimatum, the White House and State Department seemed oddly paralyzed and silent. The fear in the administration seemed to be that public statements might bring on the crackdown. The deeper fear, perhaps, was that Gorbachev himself would be toppled by Kremlin hard-liners. At any rate, the sense in Washington seemed to be that if only one could get to Wyoming, the problem would be solved.

Clearly, the prospect of Wyoming was staying Gorbachev's hand. For what awaits his foreign minister there are not only probable new concessions on arms control, but also, by all appearances, the beginnings of the economic "opening" of the West that Gorbachev has been seeking since *glasnost* and *perestroika* began.

Increasingly, it seems to be tacitly understood on all sides that Western concessions—especially economic ones—are the key to averting a crackdown and thus keeping the "evolutionary" possibility alive: the hope entertained by some Westerners that Gorbachev will somehow preside over a peaceful evolution from a totalitarian to authoritarian to democratic Soviet Union. Moreover, in the thinking of administration officials this process is increasingly becoming formalized in a kind of strategy that one skeptical U.S. official has dubbed "constructive engagement" of the Soviet Union, on loose analogy with "constructive engagement" of South Africa.

Under this strategy the United States will attempt to move, as it were, in lockstep with Soviet reforms, rewarding Soviet liberalization as it occurs with major arms control and economic concessions. Among the big "carrots" awaiting Gorbachev are most favored nation status, encouragement of new Western bank loans to the U.S.S.R., weakening of export controls on Western high technology, rapid liberalization of U.S.-Soviet trade, and Soviet membership in such international economic organizations as GATT, the World Bank, and the IMF.

There are a number of troubling aspects to this strategy, not the least of which is its moral premise. In essence, it establishes a hostage relationship, whereby the West is increasingly being asked to pay ransom to the Soviet Union so that it will not crack down on its own people and other peoples of the East bloc. Such has been the reality for the Balts for

the past three weeks. Gorbachev himself has been quite explicit about the terms of this bargain. In early July he told the Norwegian foreign minister that Soviet political reform must be rewarded by "economic cooperation from the West," in particular, "scientific goods including high-definition television and fast computers and chips." *New York Times* reporter Clyde Farnsworth recently referred to Soviet economic "demands."

The moral problem is matched by serious strategic ones. First, the Bush administration is almost certainly overestimating its ability to understand changes in the East bloc as well as its ability to withhold or reverse economic concessions in the event that the "reform" process is halted. Second, it is vastly underestimating the cost—to Western security and even to Western taxpayers—of trading away the West's crucial technological advantage to the Soviet military in the ostensible service of promoting East bloc change.

One may argue that the process of "constructive engagement" can be stopped if the Kremlin leadership is reshuffled or if Gorbachev himself cracks down. But this presumes the West will recognize a crackdown when it sees one. Gorbachev has already sent special troops to use lethal nerve gas on peaceful Georgian protesters in Tbilisi and signed into law the most draconian statutes on record regarding anti-Soviet activities (actions of which certain prominent Western Sovietologists today try to absolve him). The KGB is beginning to harass Lithuanian nationalists behind the scenes.

The Soviets, meanwhile, are trying to "package" crackdowns in a form that somehow makes them acceptable to the West. In early September "intellectuals" around Gorbachev floated, in effect, a three-fold typology of crackdowns with the *Christian Science Monitor's* Paul Quinn-Judge. Gorbachev might choose between creating a "strong authoritarian power" or what was called a "post-Communist authoritarianism." These were advertised as alternatives to an actual "crackdown" by "conservative forces." Such measures, the argument ran, might actually "stabilize" reform.

How this particular example of double-think will play in the West remains unclear. But in a world in which we have begun to distinguish between "good" and "bad" Communists, it was probably only inevitable that we would be asked to distinguish between "good" and "bad" crackdowns. Under this new *détente*, as opposed to the old, we were supposed to be able to remain forthright about Soviet human rights violations (as in Reagan's speeches in Moscow). It is amazing how quickly—under the guise of "saving" Gorbachev—we seem to be abdicating that right.

In short, in embarking on "constructive engagement" in Wyoming, the Bush administration is about to plunge into a wilderness of mirrors in which there are no clear standards and from which there is no con-

ceptual escape. Whenever unpleasanties like the Tbilisi massacre or the Baltic ultimatum occur, the argument will always be made that the hard-liners forced Gorbachev's hand. Communist "conservatives" will be blamed for whatever goes wrong; so-called "reformers" can be credited with whatever goes right. And in addition to undermining Western security—which "constructive engagement" with South Africa, for all its other drawbacks, never did—this new policy also carries with it the liability of growing silence about and complicity with the repressive actions of a morally repugnant regime.

It is instructive to contrast Gorbachev's high-tech wish list with the demands of striking Soviet miners in July—in the words of the *Washington Post's* David Remnick, "soap, detergent, toothpaste, sausage, decent shoes and underwear, sugar, tea, better quality bread, and a regular work week." Even in the sunny days of *glasnost*, it seems, a certain disparity persists between the priorities of the Soviet leadership and those of the Soviet populace at large. While the Soviet populace suffers from an acute and deepening shortage of the most ordinary goods, Gorbachev is out shopping for the highest of high-tech items. If one closely examines the deeds, as opposed to the words, of the current Soviet leadership, there is ample evidence to suggest that Soviet priorities under Gorbachev have remained remarkably similar to what they have always been: the needs of the military and the military-industrial base are being taken care of first.

Unfortunately, the Commerce Department has proved all too accommodating to Gorbachev's high-tech priorities. In July it promulgated new regulations giving the Soviets access for the first time to powerful personal computers—over ten times as powerful as they previously had been allowed and twice as potent as those approved for purchase by our own Pentagon. Hailed by some editorialists as a boon to Soviet citizens, the measure's only real effect is to welcome the Soviet military into the personal computer age. (Soviet citizens would need incredibly scarce hard currency to purchase such machines and are forbidden by law to own either a modem or a printer.)

In all, 23 Commerce "foreign availability" studies are currently under way on products including optical fiber cable, side-scan sonars, anti-friction bearings, gallium-arsenide chip technology, and ion-implanters—items, naturally, in high demand by impoverished Soviet consumers. Moreover, this week Commerce was about to decontrol highly accurate machine tools, products absolutely vital to weapons building and central to Gorbachev's not-so-consumer-oriented program of *perestroika*.

To top it off, in early September China's representatives were suddenly invited to come to Washington for talks on upgrading China's status in GATT. The Chinese were surprised, and little wonder. With the blood from the Tiananmen Square massacre hardly dry, with the administration under criticism from Capitol Hill

for pursuing a weak-kneed sanctions policy, here was the Bush administration proffering an economic plum. Why? The answer, ironically enough, turns out to lie in Baker's preparations for Wyoming. In order to begin talking about GATT "observer" status with Moscow, it is necessary to offer China, which already has observer status, the prospect of full membership. One sees how quickly in this process the tail comes to wag the dog.

A more prudent administration would be less eager to get involved, less eager to accept responsibility for *perestroika's* "failure" or "success," whatever those terms may mean. Moreover, a *widened* embargo on high-technology transfers and new Western bank loans might force the Soviets to engage in real "*perestroika*," i.e., to look within and truly begin to strip their bloated military sector in order to meet demands for consumer goods.

Finally, the administration needs to recognize that of the possible outcomes of the present turbulence in the Communist world, the "evolutionary" scenario is the least likely. Consistently, as in Afghanistan, we have underestimated what Gorbachev would be willing to do and then overestimated how this would benefit Western security. The prospect of "evolution" is likely to be dangled before us as a perpetually receding goal. Eventually, we will doubtless arrive at some obvious crackdown or moment of truth. Yet "on that day or weekend," notes former National Security Council director for international economics Roger W. Robinson, "how much Western high technology and capital will be, in effect, frozen in Soviet vaults?" Assuming the Bush administration presses forward with its morally and strategically misguided policy, we may have to wait and see.

PATRICK GYNN is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. He is completing a book on the history of arms control for New Republic Books.

'Great books,' broadly defined.

THE STANFORD LIBRARY

By Alan Berlow

With the collapse of peace talks in Paris and the imminent withdrawal of the last Vietnamese troops, Cambodia faces a continued civil war that promises only to get uglier. Practically speaking, the Paris talks accomplished nothing. A settlement is nowhere in sight. Nevertheless, the talks did succeed in making clear as never before that there are

only two options for Cambodia: the Khmer Rouge or the government installed by Vietnam after it toppled that notorious dictatorship in 1979. This is not to say that the anti-Communist forces of Prince Norodom Sihanouk and former Prime Minister Son Sann can't play a constructive role. But the long-standing hope that Sihanouk will return to Cambodia as its leader can no longer be taken seriously.

Many find both of the remaining choices unpalatable. The Khmer Rouge, who were responsible for the deaths of more than a million Cambodians during their four-year reign of terror, have never apologized for their atrocities, and they devoted their best efforts in Paris to keeping the word "genocide" out of the conference record. On the other hand, the government in Phnom Penh is led by two former Khmer Rouge: President Heng Samrin, who fled to Vietnam in 1978, and Prime Minister Hun Sen, who fled in 1977. Their regime has often been criticized for violations of human rights. They are not, however, mass murderers, and that should count for something.

Since 1982 the United States and the United Nations have avoided confronting the two real options. Instead they endorsed a coalition in which the Khmer Rouge was deodorized by two non-Communist factions led by Sihanouk and Son Sann. With Sihanouk as head of the coalition (which the Khmer Rouge still dominate militarily and politically), world leaders have been able to pretend that they are not really doing business with the heathens. The central goal has been to remove the Vietnamese and secure Cambodian "sovereignty." Longer-range issues, such as who might stop the Khmer Rouge once Vietnam pulled out, were conveniently ignored.

Unfortunately, years of international support for this unholy alliance secured nothing more than a constant state of low-level war in Cambodia. Then in April, under pressure from the Soviet Union, which wanted to re-establish ties to China, Vietnam unexpectedly announced that its troops would withdraw from Cambodia by the end of September. For the first time in a decade it seemed there was a real opportunity for peace. But the opportunity required a bit more imagination than Sihanouk, who remains the key player in this drama, could muster.

As the Paris talks began in early August, the world looked to Sihanouk as the only Cambodian capable of uniting his country. But Sihanouk had come to Paris firmly wedded to the Khmer Rouge. No doubt the prince was under enormous pressure from China to stick with these thugs, and the Chinese have been his most reliable ally since he was deposed in a coup in 1970. The Bush administration has suggested that Sihanouk distance himself from the Khmer Rouge and that it might arm his troops. But he has never trusted the Americans, who endorsed the 1970 coup. He also knows that since 1979 Washington's Cambodia "policy" has consisted largely of sitting back and watching the Chinese, Soviet, Vietnamese, and Cambodian Com-

munists fight it out among themselves.

Sihanouk's peace plan called for a four-party interim government in which each of the factions, including the Khmer Rouge, would be given an equal share. The idea, according to Sihanouk, was that unless the Khmer Rouge got a role, China would continue to back their guerrilla war. (China, the leading apologist for the Cambodian holocaust, cares as much about the lives of Cambodians as about those of baby seals or pro-democracy students. Its main aim in Cambodia is to bleed Vietnam, which it has been happy to do along with its friend Pol Pot over the last decade.) Sihanouk argued that it was better to have the Khmer Rouge as partners in government than as enemies on the battlefield.

To support Sihanouk's proposal one had not only to believe that the Khmer Rouge could be controlled by the other three factions, but to ignore the wishes of virtually the entire Cambodian population, which was enslaved by the Khmer Rouge between 1975 and 1979. Nevertheless, the proposal was treated seriously at the Paris talks and warmly endorsed by China and the Khmer Rouge.

If George Gallup had thrown the name of Charles Manson into a presidential preference poll a year ago today, it is safe to say that Manson would have garnered very little support. Most Americans probably would not have considered him presidential timber, and, I suspect, most would have rejected giving him an "equal" share of power—say a fourth of the president's Cabinet appointments. Of course the analogy is imperfect. Manson had a much smaller following than the Khmer Rouge and fewer guns, and he didn't get to kill as many people. But to the average Cambodian, the idea that Pol Pot's hand-picked lieutenants might participate in a future government is no less insane.

Sihanouk's four-party solution was rejected in Paris by the Heng Samrin-Hun Sen government, which refuses to have anything to do with the Khmer Rouge. So the talks collapsed. The problem now, of course, is that the Vietnamese army, which has prevented the Khmer Rouge from returning to Cambodia, is leaving, and the job of stopping them will shortly fall to Cambodia's 40,000-man army and 100,000-man militia. No one knows if they can cut it. By the time the four parties get around to talking again, the Khmer Rouge may be back in Phnom Penh.

The international community can take two steps to discourage this possibility. It should insist that a U.N. force monitor the Vietnamese troop withdrawal, and it should pressure Sihanouk to break with the Khmer Rouge and deal directly with Phnom Penh. A U.N. statement verifying the withdrawal is critical because of the persistent issue of Cambodian sovereignty—which, since 1979, has been the basis for recognition of the Khmer Rouge at the U.N., for China's arming of the Khmer Rouge, for Sihanouk's alliance with the Khmer Rouge, and for U.S. and other aid to the non-Communist resistance allied with the

Khmer Rouge. If the U.N. determines that the Vietnamese have withdrawn, sovereignty becomes a moot issue; the rationale for continuing to fight the Phnom Penh government is undermined, and each of the parties that has invoked it must come up with a new one if it wants to support—directly or indirectly—the Khmer Rouge. Once the Vietnamese have gone, Sihanouk's attraction as a convenient middle ground between the Khmer Rouge and the Phnom Penh government will begin to dim.

It is, however, already clear that many nations prefer to keep living with the illusion Sihanouk has provided. The United States, which campaigned for Vietnam's withdrawal for 11 years and favored a U.N. monitoring team prior to the Paris talks, now says it opposes monitoring, absent a comprehensive peace settlement. In effect, the United States seems to be saying, "We would rather not know the truth about the Vietnamese withdrawal." This uncertainty could give the Bush administration a rationale for pressing its case with Congress to arm Sihanouk and Son Sann. It may seem a thin reed to lean on—especially since hundreds of journalists and foreign observers will watch the Vietnamese troops depart—but the Khmer Rouge and Sihanouk are also relying on it; they seem to think they can exploit uncertainty about the withdrawal to convince the world they are justified in continuing the war.

The international community should let Sihanouk know that if he persists in his alliance with the Khmer Rouge, if he insists on waging a war against a fictitious, invisible Vietnamese enemy, his claim to the leadership of Cambodia will lose whatever legitimacy it may once have had. In the past, the international community has shown an obscene tolerance for the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge. But how long can Sihanouk really expect world leaders to stand by him if the Khmer Rouge begin to retake Cambodia? How long will Sihanouk himself stick with the new, improved Khmer Rouge? Is he prepared only to see them take Batambang or some other Western province? Or is he ready to march with them all the way to Phnom Penh? And does he really think that the Khmer Rouge, once victorious, will turn over control to him?

Sihanouk assumes that his clout will diminish once he breaks with the Khmer Rouge, and in a strictly military sense he is right. He may also fear that after such a break the Phnom Penh government will be less willing to make concessions. But if he removes the Khmer Rouge albatross from his neck, his credibility and influence worldwide can only increase.

That doesn't mean he can install himself as the next leader of Cambodia. But it does mean that he could still make a decisive difference in this drama. His greatest strengths are in resources he has thus far failed to command—most notably influence with the Cambodian exile community, but also with world leaders. The government in Phnom Penh is desperate for international aid, loans, investment, and recognition. It needs teachers, technicians, scientists, and managers who

would be willing to spend a few years or longer to help get Cambodia back on its feet. If Sihanouk is truly the leader of the exile community, as he says, he should have no trouble producing the names of several thousand skilled exiles who would be willing to return. He should also be able to help end the international isolation of Cambodia and exploit sympathy for his country to win commitments both for its rebuilding and for the containment of the Khmer Rouge.

Sihanouk could use all of this as leverage to exact concessions from Phnom Penh: a major role for a democratic opposition in a new government, truly free elections, a multiparty system, a free press, and so on. It is a measure of his failure as a leader that, rather than consolidate these resources during the past decade, he has tied Cambodia's future to those most responsible for its dissolution.

The civilized world should seek to isolate the Khmer Rouge politically and militarily. If Sihanouk wants to stay in the Khmer Rouge camp, then he should be isolated as well. With or without Sihanouk, civilized nations must now deal with Phnom Penh. Failure to choose is to choose the Khmer Rouge.

ALAN BERLOW is a free-lance writer living in Manila.

'Great books,' broadly defined.

THE STANFORD LIBRARY

By Michael Stanford

The dust is starting to settle on the eucalyptus trees and red-tiled roofs of Stanford. The curricular reform that was the subject of a bitter national debate is now a fait accompli. This fall entering freshmen are taking a sequence of three courses in Cultures, Ideas and Values, in place of a similar sequence in Western Culture. (Although the change was mandated by the Faculty Senate in the spring of 1988, the Western Culture Program was allowed a year to reform and rename itself.)

Journalists covering the Stanford controversy have frequently failed to note that CIV (like Western Culture) is not one course but many. Enrolling freshmen choose from one of eight "tracks" (three-course sequences) with titles like Great Works, Literature and the Arts, and Europe and the Americas. Under the old regime, the different tracks were organized around a common core of 15 texts—standard literary, philosophical, and political classics. The faculty resolution that instituted CIV abolished this common core, requiring only that each course include at least one

European and one non-European text.

Clearly this requirement is almost as vague as the new program's title is vacuous. Consequently the different tracks are likely to drift further and further apart. Some will probably retain the traditional emphasis on Western high culture, while being careful to stress the contributions of women and ethnic minorities to that culture. For example, this year the track in which I teach, Great Works, will begin by reading the Book of Genesis and the *Iliad* and end by reading Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*. (And the inclusion of the last is not the sop some conservatives may take it for; Morrison's splendid novel draws as freely on the Old Testament and Homer as it does on Afro-American folklore.) To fulfill our mandate to read non-European texts, we will spend some time on those non-Western cultures, such as that of medieval Islam, whose influence on the West was palpable.

Other tracks will no doubt take a more radical approach. The model here may be the Europe and the Americas track, which during the transition year promulgated a reading list heavy with modern left-wing and Third World writers. Instructors in this track notably found space on the syllabus for not one but *two* books by Frantz Fanon. (In more traditional tracks, there is never time to read more than one Platonic dialogue or Shakespeare play.) The syllabus for the Europe and the Americas track has been especially deplored by conservative commentators, many of whom have mistaken it for a general CIV reading list.

But the controversy over Stanford's culture courses has revealed deeper, and more clearly ideological, confusions on both sides of the debate. Conservatives have shown a tendency to confuse the whole intellectual heritage of the West with the economic and political order that currently prevails in the NATO nations: capitalism and representative democracy. Unlike some of my colleagues, I agree with the conservatives that this order is worth defending. But I fail to see how a traditional great-books curriculum goes very far toward defending it. Of the nine or ten major Western political theorists we read in the Great Works track, only one—John Locke—may be said to endorse such an order. Our study of political thought extends from the hierarchical totalitarianism of Plato to the leveling totalitarianism of Marx.

It is also difficult to think of a major imaginative writer of the last 200 years who has had a good word to say about capitalism. To read the great canonical figures of our literature, from the Romantic poets through the Victorian novelists to the high modernist writers, is to attend to an almost unbroken (and alternately cogent and cranky) critique of capitalist society. So when a conservative students' organization runs an ad lamenting that "Stanford students are no longer required to study the culture that gave them freedom," it should be pointed out that most of the writers on any traditional great-books list have not been advocates of what contemporary conservatives recognize as freedom.

**Take away the sight-seeing,
shopping, carnivals and
cultural performances,
and what do Germany and
Austria have left to offer?**

The fact is that Germany and Austria have so much to offer in winter that you probably can't fit it all into one vacation. But with The Lufthansa Holiday Planner,SM you can come pretty close. And you can do it at unbeatable savings, including a free Avis rental car for one week.

For your free copy of The Lufthansa Holiday Planner, call **1-800-645-3880**, send in the coupon or see your Travel Agent. And don't be disappointed if you can't do it all. You'll probably be going back again.



Lufthansa
German Airlines

300

**The Lufthansa
Holiday Planner.SM**

Send to: Lufthansa German Airlines
Drawer S, Bellport, N.Y. 11713
or call toll-free **1-800-645-3880**



Name (Please Print) _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Travel Agent _____

Phone Number _____

NR 10/5/89

The free Avis car is offered with unlimited mileage and is available to parties of two flying round trip on Lufthansa from the U.S. on any day except Friday or Saturday. The offer applies to group "A" cars reserved 14 days prior to departure and is available November 1, 1989 through March 31, 1990. Other restrictions may apply.

The same kind of confusion prevails among the cultural radicals who have advocated the shift to CIV and other ventures in canon-busting. The cultural left likes to imagine that a traditional great-books course is a device for reinforcing the political and social status quo. But it is hard to see how this reinforcement works. Stanford's Western Culture courses typically centered their spring quarter reading lists on a line of 19th- and early-20th-century intellectual revolutionaries: the Romantics, Marx, Darwin, Nietzsche, Freud. These are clearly canonical, inescapable figures whom no conservative intellectual would wish removed from the syllabus. But is reading them an inducement to voting Republican?

Since the cultural radicals almost always stand on the political left as well, it seems odd for them to be advocating so much attention to non-Western traditions. I don't notice any Confucians among the canon-busters, but I do see plenty of Marxists, feminists, and deconstructionists—whose ideologies are as irredeemably Western as the ideology of their conservative opponents. And when the radicals borrow the perspective of anthropology to make their case against ethnocentrism, they are drawing on a peculiarly Western form of inquiry—a discipline that would seem to apotheosize the scientific method of the West.

It is especially puzzling to watch feminists joining the attack on "Western" values. By all objective measures the status of women is far higher within the West than outside it; and where women are most oppressed, their oppression is fully sanctioned by cultural tradition. Earlier generations of feminists habitually found in Asian and African cultures their most damning examples of the degradation and oppression of women. Those older feminists would be appalled but probably not surprised to learn that the custom of bride-burning still prevails in India, and that, according to the World Health Organization, at least 80 million African women have undergone clitoridectomy or some other form of traditional and mutilating sexual surgery.

A deeper, more general paradox might be noted. Two hundred years ago Edmund Burke blasted the radical supporters of the French Revolution for assuming the existence of a universal set of human rights. Burke argued that a citizen could understand his "rights" only in relation to his particular culture; it made no sense to speak of the "rights of man," though it did to speak of the "rights of Englishmen," because Englishmen were assigned definite rights by a traditional, unwritten "constitution." The form of a country's government, said Burke, should be founded on its particular "circumstances and habits." Burke, in other words, argued for a politics of cultural relativism. In Tom Paine's famous reply to Burke, he violently rejected this appeal to cultural difference. The rights of man, in Paine's view, were universal, and the only legitimate form of government was one that secured those rights. Thus a legitimate government would look very much the same wherever it arose; and the revolutionary regime in France stood as a "model of

good government to the universe."

Conservatives in Britain and America are fond of tracing their intellectual roots to Burke. To Robert Nisbet, for instance, Burke is "the Marx of conservatism." But Burke presumably would be puzzled by contemporary conservatives' support for the Reagan doctrine, with its call for the export of democratic revolution. He would note that it is now the conservatives rather than the radicals who proclaim a transcultural theory of rights and set out to provide a model of good government to the universe. Burke might wonder how they propose to introduce the values of democratic capitalism into non-Western societies without rupturing the intricate network of custom and tradition that, from the standpoint of his conservatism, is precisely what makes a society worth defending. Paine would be similarly puzzled to find that contemporary radicals have embraced the doctrine of cultural relativism. How, he might ask, can any radicalism found itself on a theory of justice that is less than universal? Can radicals really accept the maintenance of oppressive traditions, so long as those traditions are not "Western"?

To read Burke and Paine, in other words, is to be made aware of some of the ideological confusion that surrounds the current debate over "multicultural" education. This kind of critical perspective, it seems to me, is precisely what courses like Western Culture or CIV should aim to develop in our students. And it seems to me that a traditional great-books reading list is more likely to develop such a perspective than one that emphasizes the work of writers like Fanon.

Matthew Arnold famously defined "culture" as "the pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters that most concern us, the best that has been thought and said in the world." Conservatives generally quote Arnold's definition with approval. (William Bennett quoted it last year at Stanford.) Radicals, by contrast, dismiss Arnold's notion of the "best" as an unjustifiable appeal to a universal standard, and reject his vision of "the world" as narrowly Eurocentric. But both conservatives and radicals usually fail to quote the whole of the sentence in which Arnold's definition of culture appears. Knowledge of the "best," Arnold goes on to say, is valuable because it "turn[s] a stream of fresh and free thought on our stock notions and habits, which we now follow staunchly but mechanistically, vainly imagining that there is a virtue in following them staunchly which makes up for the mischief of following them mechanically." For all their nominal familiarity, writers like Plato and Nietzsche, Dante and Shakespeare, Descartes and Darwin offer our students not a warm bath of platitudes but a fire hose of fresh thought. We should be leery of replacing them with authors whose work mechanically reinforces the stock political notions of our time.

MICHAEL STANFORD (no relation) is a lecturer in Stanford University's Program in Cultures, Ideas and Values.

DENG'S PYRRHIC VICTORY

By *Liu Binyan*

Deng Xiaoping regards the massacre at Tiananmen Square as a great victory. Hundreds of thousands of dissident students and their supporters were brought under control, and order was restored to the streets of Beijing. The truth, of course, is that the uprising was the greatest show of democratic force in over 40 years of Communist rule in China. It gave the Chinese people confidence in their strength and exposed the deep rifts within the Party leadership. The movement ended with the old ruling clique returning to the old political system, but its grip on the country is more feeble than ever. The extraordinary power and potential of China's democracy movement is now clear.

When Hu Yaobang, the reformist-minded Party secretary, was ousted from office in 1987, the student movement on university campuses retreated. Many thought that the students, demoralized and temporarily defeated, had lost interest in politics, and that there would be no more large-scale demonstrations. No one foresaw the events precipitated by Hu's death this year. On April 16 a small number of students gathered at Tiananmen Square to place wreaths in his honor. By April 22, 200,000 students had defied a ban to carry out a demonstration of mourning, with over 100,000 onlookers expressing sympathy. Afterward, over 300,000 students petitioned the government through hunger strikes and peaceful demonstrations, winning the support of over a million people, including intellectuals, workers, entrepreneurs, and ordinary citizens—an unprecedented event in Communist China. The students' political maturity could be seen in their organizational discipline and rationality.

In sharp contrast are the isolation, weakness, hypocrisy, and brutality of the Communist rulers. Two general Party secretaries have been dismissed within two-and-a-half years. And it was only by forcing every

LIU BINYAN was purged from the Chinese Communist Party in 1957 and sent to labor reform for his articles exposing Party corruption. He was "rehabilitated" in 1979, but was expelled again in the 1987 campaign against bourgeois liberalism. Liu is currently a distinguished writer in residence at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.

provincial Party committee to declare its support for the dismissal of Zhao Ziyang and the appointment of Jiang Zeming that the top central leaders were able to gain the formal majority necessary to pass this measure. These leaders themselves are largely controlled by eight senile "retired emperors," all over 80 years old, who do not hold formal office in the Party or government but who prop up their rule through brute force and lies. Deng and his cohorts have lost the confidence of the Chinese people and thus the legitimate right to rule.

Americans often ask whether the Chinese people's demands for democratic reform spring from the influence of Western culture. It is true that during the reform era many books were published that discuss Western society and political thought; that the return of foreign-educated students has spread democratic thinking in society; and that the Chinese people have been exposed to Western culture through the mass media. But these influences alone never could have brought about such an enormous movement. Tiananmen Square was the inevitable result of a fundamental breakdown in China's internal political, economic, and social structure.

Since the beginning of the reform and open-door policies in 1978 and 1979, the Chinese economy has grown rapidly. The new agricultural system gave the peasants (who constitute 80 percent of the population) incentives to increase production; and the growth of local enterprises and the influx of foreign capital and technology prompted rapid industrial expansion. The flourishing of free markets brought about a rise in people's standard of living.

But economic growth was accompanied by an explosion of social and political problems. Deng Xiaoping not only repeatedly refused to carry out political reform, he tried to whittle down the few freedoms people did enjoy. Economic reform ran into all kinds of bureaucratic obstacles, and the Party rectification campaign, aimed at stemming the tide of corruption and the degeneration of Party ethics, ended in failure. Graft and embezzlement and other uses of public office for private gain became rampant at all levels of government. Serious crimes increased rapidly, and official profiteering ran wild. By 1983 the crisis was evident; by 1985 it had become pervasive.

The ouster of Hu Yaobang and the anti-bourgeois

liberalization campaign in 1987 created more anger and despair, as did the soaring inflation. Chinese intellectuals, rooted in a tradition of serving the nation as a natural duty, adopted an attitude of silent protest against a series of Party-orchestrated political campaigns, including the anti-spiritual pollution campaign and the anti-bourgeois liberalization campaign. Then last February three groups of intellectuals signed open letters addressed to the authorities demanding human rights. Two months later university students—who are least bound by traditional thinking, and haven't lost their vigor and their sense of justice—resolutely marched from their campuses in mourning Hu's death.

One doesn't have to look far to discover how this crisis came about. Deng Xiaoping was attempting to promote economic reform while stubbornly insisting on upholding the "Four Principles" (the socialist path, the leadership of the Communist Party, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought). His opposition to "bourgeois liberalization" and his desire to preserve Mao's overarching ideological and political framework were clearly at odds with his economic goals. It was inevitable that eventually either economic reform would break through the old political order, or the old political order would act as a brake on economic reform.

Henry Kissinger, among others, likes to point out that it was Deng who initiated the idea of reform in the first place. *Time* magazine even selected him twice as Man of the Year. It's hard to reconcile the image of a leading advocate of reform with that of the executioner who crushed the democratic movement and then formed an alliance with those who had been the harshest critics of his policies. But Deng is a pragmatist, not a reformer. This is the man who in the 1960s noted that it doesn't matter whether the cat is white or black—if it catches mice, it is a good cat. After his return to power in 1978, faced with an economy devastated by the "Gang of Four," he resolved to dismantle the Maoist economic structure and introduce practical reforms that would arouse people's enthusiasm for production. This did require courage and spunk. At the time the conservatives were very influential. Some provincial Party committees simply refused to go along with the new policies; others adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

In Deng's efforts to cross old ideological boundaries, he urged Hu (then chairman of the Organization Department of the Central Committee) to redress the cases of those falsely accused of political crimes during the Cultural Revolution, and to rehabilitate intellectuals who had been labeled as rightists during the anti-rightist campaign of 1957. These measures gained him widespread support. He subsequently encouraged Hu to initiate the debate over the slogan "Practice is the sole criterion of truth," which was a guiding principle of the reform ideology and established a more solid theoretical justification for modifying the orthodox Maoist economic system.

The object of these actions was not to radically re-

vamp the system, but simply to strengthen Chinese Communist Party rule, to prevent rebellion by those whose political consciousness had been raised during the Cultural Revolution, and to consolidate Deng's power within the Party. The real test of his zeal for reform came with the Democracy Wall movement. In the fall of 1978 political associations began to spring up spontaneously, and people from all over the country posted large posters on a wall near the Xidan intersection in Beijing. They discussed the lessons of the Cultural Revolution, criticized Mao's mistakes, and demanded democracy for China.

The next spring Deng cracked down on the movement (Wei Jingshen, one of its leaders, is still in jail). At about that time he issued the slogan "Uphold the four principles, and oppose bourgeois liberalization," an indication that he meant to preserve Maoist ideology. He could tolerate and even encourage attempts to correct the ideological mistakes in the Party only as long as his political power was not fully consolidated. As soon as his position was secure, and his economic reform policies under way, he reverted to a conservative ideology and politics.

To Deng, as to Mao, people are nothing more than instruments: in wartime they serve as soldiers; in peacetime they are hands for production. The common belief of both leaders is "If I conquer the mountain, then it is I who sits on the mountain." ("I" is the Party, which fought for power and thus has the legitimate right to it.) Only they can give orders, and the people must be docile and obedient.

People had gained a certain degree of economic freedom from the reform and open-door policies, but when they demanded democratic political rights, these were denied on the grounds that "the Four Little Asian Dragons [Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan] did not carry out democratic reform, yet they nevertheless made great economic progress." When people express dissatisfaction, the rulers accuse them of "picking up the bowl to eat meat, and putting it down to curse their Mother." When hundreds of thousands of people shouted, "Deng Xiaoping resign," at Tiananmen Square, the leaders had the gall to say that "it is not just the case of a few individuals who cannot distinguish right from wrong, but we are dealing with the dregs of society and a gang of rebels who want to subvert our country and throw out our Party."

Despite his supreme position, Deng of course did not act alone. Those who have significant influence over him include Party elders Chen Yun and Po Yipo, who have made every effort to derail economic reform; Hu Qiaoam and Deng Liqun, who stubbornly uphold Maoist ideology; Peng Zhen and Li Xiannian, who favor "old people's politics" and refuse to retire; and Wang Zhen and Yang Shangkun, who cling to a superstitious belief in military force. It was inevitable that Deng would be influenced by this faction. Having spent much of his life in the military, he too has an almost mystical confidence in the power of the military. With the help of

these ossified ideologues, he destroyed the reform project that he created. They all refuse to see that the political system is destroying itself from within.

The Tiananmen conflagration could not have been started without the sparks of inflation and government corruption. There were three factors that led to China's crippling rate of inflation. The first is the so-called "buying power of social groups." This peculiarly Chinese phenomenon refers to the fact that the spending not only of government departments and all state enterprises, but of companies, Party organs, and certain social groups supported by the state, are paid for with public funds. Since the Maoist era, there have been repeated injunctions to restrict the spending power of these groups. But not only was the government unable to bring the spending under control; the spending has increased every year.

According to figures published by the State Statistical Bureau, in 1977 social groups spent a total of 13.4 billion Chinese yuan; by 1988 spending had reached 66.5 billion yuan, and the national budget deficit had reached massive proportions. And as a reporter for the Xin Hua News Agency pointed out, these figures take into account only spending that is officially recorded; if "black market" spending was included, the figure would be up to about 100 billion yuan. With a GNP of around 200 billion yuan, the tremendous impact of this type of spending on inflation is self-evident.

The second factor is the scope of capital investment. Mao called for a development strategy based on reduced capital investment, but he never pulled it off. The reason is that the leaders of each province, city, and local government, as well as the heads of departments under the Party's Central Committee, all want their region to be the most developed. The scale and quality of an official's development projects serve as a record of his achievements, and the greater his "family property"—i.e., the size and scope of production in his home district—the greater his own power. In 1987 there was a campaign to cut this kind of wasteful investment, but it still ended up 30 percent higher than in 1986. Forty percent of this went to paying employee salaries and benefits, thus directly stimulating consumption, thus raising prices.

The third factor is China's bloated bureaucracy. For 40 years it has expanded, becoming an increasingly parasitic entity. Under Mao numerous campaigns were launched for "better staff and streamlined administration," but the bureaucracy only got bigger. In 1983-84 Deng made his own attempt, but he too failed. The number of public officials in Party and government organs has increased from 1.8 million in 1957 to 27 million. In the last several years, lower-level government departments were given greater autonomy. Though intended to decrease the number of personnel, this had the opposite effect, and it raised the costs of production. State enterprises and the rapidly growing number of administrative "companies" have derived the greatest benefits from the relative freedoms

of economic reform, and they have become those most actively engaged in speculation and profiteering. The resulting inflation has directly undercut the achievements of reform.

All three of these elements are tied to the existence of an elite bureaucratic class. Chinese bureaucrats are neither supervised nor subject to legal constraints. This class emerged during Mao's era but was limited in scale, and with the government's frequent political campaigns and tight economic control, its members were afraid to be too unscrupulous. After 1977, with the gradual loosening of Party control, corruption flourished along with the new economic freedoms.

The Chinese economy, which is 90 percent "publicly" owned (the so-called ownership by the whole people), is in fact controlled by this privileged bureaucratic class. It holds a virtual monopoly over raw materials, energy supplies, transportation, communication facilities, and financial resources. These bureaucrats wield tremendous authority, but because they are not held personally responsible for production levels, the abuse of public office is rampant. Those in newly emerging enterprises have to proffer gifts, banquet invitations, and bribes to obtain capital and resources. The stealing and selling of economic information for personal gain is common, and even the children of officials engage in malfeasance.

Many officials have worked in the same location since land reform in the 1950s. They have long-standing relations with their superiors and former colleagues and war companions, and a vast network of friends and family. In one county in Hebei province, a county magistrate embezzled 2,000 yuan. He was not of very high rank, and the sum was not significant, but when the central government sent a team to investigate, 800 people came to testify in his behalf.

The independent judicial process has totally broken down: those who pervert justice for a bribe are not punished by law, and those who shirk their duties are not apprehended. The higher an official's rank, the safer he is from punishment. As long as he has a "behind-the-scenes supporter," he is guaranteed not to be reprimanded for illegal behavior. In legal cases involving officials or their relatives, the real criminals are protected, and the innocent are punished.

In 1983 the Central Committee initiated Party rectification. But after two years the campaign ended in failure. According to the *People's Daily*, 100,000 Party members of all ranks were kicked out for infractions of discipline and illegal activities. Yet only about 30 officials, of relatively low rank, were among them. No higher-ranking officials were included, let alone at the Central level.

In early 1986 Hu Yaobang convened an enlarged Party conference of 8,000 cadres calling for a continuation of the campaign and a determination to deal with "critical" cases, i.e., high-level officials. But not only were these cases not dealt with; Hu himself was forced to resign a year later. Since then a trend of "reversing

verdicts" has set in, with those accused of illegal activities making a big fuss about having been the victims of the "bourgeois liberalization," and being absolved of all wrongdoing.

Most journalists and employees in the judicial system and financial departments have long known about the illegal behavior and many have struggled to expose it. But the offenders are protected under the banner of "safeguarding stability and unity" and "opposing bourgeois liberalization," promoted by Party committees at all levels. Still, the witnesses to corruption, though powerless to stop it, remember it. They have shifted over the years from disappointment to despair, from dissatisfaction to fury. Most have settled for passive resistance: some are indifferent; others are cynical, engaged only in pleasure-seeking; some engage in work slowdowns, or are merely perfunctory in their work.

Throughout the population, however, there are those who have found their own means to redress their grievances. In 1985 and 1986 students launched their series of protests. At the same time disruptive social behavior was on the rise, and criminal cases were increasing at a rate of 30 percent to 40 percent a year. Meanwhile, the bureaucratic monopoly over the supply of fertilizer and diesel oil, which allowed officials to sell through the black market at high prices, created fury among the peasantry. In February 1987 a researcher in charge of agricultural policy revealed that the scale of peasant demonstrations had far surpassed that of the student demonstrations in 1986. But because of the vast countryside, the isolation and dispersion of the peasants, and the restraints on the flow of information, the society remains largely ignorant of these events. Recently in Hu Lan County in Manchuria, the "Hu Lan Robin Hood" appeared—a person who specialized in killing policemen known to be brutal and corrupt. The inhabitants of a nearby county posted a large sign saying, "We welcome the Hu Lan Robin Hood to carry out an investigation in our county." Organizations have sprung up whose goals are to "bring peace out of chaos" and to "kill the rich and distribute the wealth."

What will be the Party's next step? Deng recently called for the continuation of reform and open-door policies, and for a new leadership, which is supposed to make people believe that "the situation is hopeful, that reform is still being pursued." He has also called for those guilty of corruption to be punished, for "ten to 20 serious cases of corruption to be tried as showcases," as proof of the government's determination to deal seriously with the problem. But he has also been saying that "the four principles are fundamentally sound," that if any problem exists, it is because they "have not been upheld thoroughly enough," and that the "suppression of bourgeois liberalism and spiritual pollution should be more actively undertaken."

After the massacre of Tiananmen Square, the Deng-Li-Yang clique (Deng Xiaoping, Li Peng, and Yang Shangkun) lost the last shred of the people's confi-

dence. The nationwide wave of arrests has thrown the country into a white terror even more frenzied than during the Cultural Revolution. Even as Deng professes to want to continue reform policies and crack down on corrupt officials, he labels scholars and students "counterrevolutionary elements."

Since the Communist Party came to power, its authority has been absolute, encompassing every aspect of people's private lives. The rulers have refused to countenance any constitutionally guaranteed rights: freedom of the press, elections for people's representatives, an independent judicial process. They demand that people obey orders and maintain "unity with the Party." They have refused all demands for people's supervision over the Party, claiming that the Party can correct its own mistakes. People may have believed such lies in the 1950s and 1960s, but ten years of the Cultural Revolution and ten years of reform have heightened their political consciousness, as the angry shouts of the hundreds of thousands on the Square testified.

Since then, the schisms within the Party organization from the highest level down to the grass roots have become even more apparent. Many Party members have publicly resigned, among them influential intellectual elites. Disillusionment within the Chinese diplomatic community abroad has been steadily increasing. Fewer and fewer young people are looking to join the Party. The control of the central leadership over the local and grass-roots Party organs, and the control of the Party organization over Party members, is steadily weakening. As the leaders' impotence has become manifest, they have resorted to increasingly fascist methods. They now must coerce Party organizations at every level into demonstrating their support and loyalty, compelling cadres and intellectuals to make "declarations of unity with the Party."

Meanwhile, productivity has fallen drastically, and government departments are in a state of semi-paralysis. Peasants have been refusing to sell their products because the state purchasing price is so low and the government often does not even have the cash to buy them. The Li Peng government has discovered that guns can temporarily suppress a democratic movement but cannot solve pervasive economic and social problems.

The life expectancy of this government cannot be long. No one expects its successor to be a truly democratic one. Nor is it certain that it will abandon the self-destructive ways of the old men now ruling the country. But it is clear that the Chinese people are no longer lulled by disingenuous promises of reform. For three or four days after the Tiananmen Square massacre university students in cities all over the country continued to demonstrate. The government crackdown gave birth to an underground resistance movement. In greater numbers and with renewed determination, people will continue to organize, and to pursue their struggle through both legal and non-legal means.

(Translated by Corinna-Barbara Francis.)

SCANDIA

The Shoulder Bag For People On The Go!

IT HOLDS EVERYTHING!

The Scandia is intelligently designed to hold all the books, paper, equipment and clothes you could ever need to carry.

There are even special pockets for all those little odds and ends that seem to get lost in ordinary bags. The sturdy canvas Scandia measures 14½" across, 11" deep, and 4" wide (the perfect size for an airplane carry-on), and has six inner and outer pockets. And for those times when you need a little extra space, just open the Scandia's inside zipper and the bag expands to a full 8 inches in width! No matter how much you pack into the Scandia, it will still be trim enough to carry comfortably.

IT'S EXTREMELY DURABLE.

As anyone who has ever owned a Scandia will testify, *this bag lasts for years*. The Scandia's high-quality canvas is water-resistant, color-fast, and scuff-proof. Its heavy duty zippers, piping, and snaps are well-made and extremely durable. And the Scandia will stay in style for years; its attractive, casual look goes as well with a business suit as it does with jeans and a sweater. And with six handsome colors to choose from, you might want to own more than one!



**NOW ONLY
\$19.95**



The Scandia's remarkable design makes it roomy enough to hold all your gear, yet trim enough to carry comfortably.

There's simply no other shoulder bag that's as lightweight, versatile, stylish, durable and affordable as the Scandia.

If you've shopped around for high-quality shoulder bags, briefcases, and purses, you're probably aware that most of these items cost at least \$50. But, because we've made a mass purchase of Scandia bags, we are able to sell them at the remarkably low price of only \$19.95 each. Surely, that's a small price to pay for a big capacity, smart-looking bag that will last for years.

With these six handsome colors to choose from, you're sure to find a Scandia to suit your taste.

BLACK GRAY BURGUNDY BLUE KHAKI BROWN



Credit Card Customers Call Toll Free



24 Hours—7 Days a Week

1-800-242-6657

Barnes & Noble

Booksellers Since 1873

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

METHOD OF PAYMENT

☐ Check ☐ VISA ☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express

CREDIT CARD NUMBER

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

EXP DATE

SIGNATURE

DEPT. B257 126 FIFTH AVE., NY, NY 10011

ITEM #	STYLE	QTY	TOTAL
#1377068	BLUE		
#1377027	BLACK		
#1377019	GRAY		
#1377035	BROWN		
#1377043	KHAKI		
#1377050	BURGUNDY		
Merchandise Total			
Add sales tax for deliveries to MA, PA, NY, NJ, MN & CA (6%).			
Add \$2.50 per bag ordered for shipping & insurance			
ORDER TOTAL			

Barnes & Noble Unconditional Guarantee

You must be completely satisfied with every item you order from Barnes & Noble by mail, or you may return it to us, for a full refund.

BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Casualties of Hollywood

Through most of his career Brian DePalma has been too clever for his own good. Once, with *The Untouchables*, he was clever enough. Now that he has chosen the largest subject of his life, he isn't clever at all. Few would have expected that, when he tackled the Vietnam War, he would address it with commensurate depth, but at least there was a chance that he might show some ingenuity. **Casualties of War** (Columbia) turns out, however, to be clumsy and banal. It's as if DePalma had become embarrassed about his usual slickness, in relation to this material, but then had nothing to put in its place.

Still, he has profited in a way by his choice of subject. Some of the press have apparently taken his very choice of serious material as proof in itself that he has dealt with it seriously. He hasn't. He gives us a chance to look once more at a perennial and terrible subject—what happens to the humanity of relatively decent men when they are plunged into war—but he fumbles his treatment of it.

The central act of the film is the kidnapping of a Vietnamese girl by U.S. soldiers, her rape and her murder. The night before they go out on patrol, a squad of five men wants to go to a village near their base to visit a brothel. Passes are canceled because the Viet Cong is in the village, presumably using the brothel. Vindictively, when the squad is out the next day, the sergeant orders them to

grab a girl from a village and bring her along. In time four of the five soldiers rape her. The exception is Eriksson, the newcomer in the squad, who tries to protect and free the girl, and fails. Later she is murdered, for the squad's convenience.

We then move to Part Two—Eriksson's struggle at the base camp to bring the four other members of the squad to justice. He has to fight the army's protectiveness of its own, its unwillingness to make waves, its prejudice against villagers on the suspicion that many of them are Cong supporters. But Eriksson persists, and eventually the judicial wheels roll.

All this is framed by a postwar encounter in a suburban train back home when Eriksson glimpses a young Asian woman who reminds him of the Vietnamese girl.

(Eriksson must have a busy time flashing back if he sinks so completely into memory every time he glimpses a young Asian woman in America.) At the end we return to the train. The young woman understands somehow that he has been going through a mnemonic torment and assures him—either out of some Delphic power in herself or on order from the film's producers—that the bad dream is over now, all will be well.

We never learn what this means. (Will he forget about the Vietnamese girl? Will he accept what happened to her as just one of those things? What in the world does the ending *mean*?) But this closing assurance is given to Eriksson over a swelling chorus of angelic voices that is only the last offense in one of the most ludicrous scores ever plopped onto a purportedly serious picture. It was composed by Ennio Morricone, who has drooled musically over more than 175 pictures—to judge by the ones I've seen, anyway—and here contributes this film's outstanding blotch. The score under the suspense sequences sounds like the organ stuff that used to accompany suspense in silent pictures; Eriksson's pronouncements about morality and justice are heard over horn chords; and those heavenly, redemptive voices at the end are the crowning marshmallow. Whatever the film's claims to gravity, Morricone's music helps to dim them. But then the director who made this hollow picture is the man who commissioned the score.

He is also the director who commissioned David Rabe to write the screenplay from a book by Daniel Lang. Rabe is one of the most overrated American playwrights, probably the one most likely to lapse into undergraduate irony and sermonizing on the subject of war. In his screenplay all the characters seem familiar, not from life but from previous films or plays or novels; all of them are pushed around like charade figures to symbolize Quality A in conflict with Quality B. Following the story is less like watching a drama unfold than like watching a recipe being filled, a cup of bitterness, a spoon-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Four Adventures of Reinette and Mirabelle. Eric Rohmer very close again to his past excellence. Four insights into two young French women, presented with wit and subtlety. (Reviewed 8/28/89) **High Fidelity.** An engaging and enlightening documentary about the members of the Guarneri Quartet, their work and lives. An oasis of sanity in a dizzying world. (9/18&25/89) **sex, lies, and videotape.** A discovery. Steven Soderbergh's first feature, about four young people in Baton Rouge, written and directed with a quiet mastery that makes it much larger than its story. (9/4/89) **When Harry Met Sally . . .** Attractive merchandise. Brisk dialogue and lively acting. This Manhattan comedy-romance glistens most of the time. (8/21/89) —SK

ful of lust, a dash of remorse, etc. Except for the suffering of the girl—very easy to convey—the story is detached and unaffected, though guns are going off and people are being killed throughout.

Whenever we might possibly begin to be involved, the dialogue bars us. Admittedly, this is partly because the actors are incomprehensible about 30 percent of the time. Mostly it's because Rabe ranges from the war-movie cliché to the stogy to the incredibly fancy. I thought I heard one tough grunt refer to Winnie the Pooh; I know I heard the bestial sergeant make a wordplay on a line from Psalms: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of evil, I shall fear no death."

This film was supposed to be a drama of cause and effect, the crime against the girl as catalyst for Eriksson's struggle with the military. But the first part is so synthetic that Part Two seems a protracted, puny epilogue instead of a courageous resolution. (And would the girl's body still be lying where it fell—in the same condition—by the time the Army got around to investigating the case?)

Rabe has dissociated himself from the finished film, and has done even that in a woolly, ambiguous manner. I hope that his displeasure with the picture begins with his own contribution. Unless DePalma tampered with every line, Rabe can't get off the hook so airily.

Stephen H. Burum was the cinematographer of *The Untouchables* and did a good job of making history look both present and historical. Here, however, he shows a strange talent for transforming real locations into phony back-lot settings. In fact DePalma made the outdoor sequences in Thailand, but the squad's first night patrol is lighted in a way that makes every tree seem spurious. This peculiarity recurs.

The casting and the acting are mostly deplorable. Thuy Thu Le is moderately affecting as the victimized girl, but any Asian actress, speaking a strange language, bound and ravished by brutes, would have to be inordinately dull not to be affecting. Three members of the squad demonstrate casting at the stock level. Sean Penn, as the sergeant of the squad and the instigator of the abduction, is rankly dreadful. He does an imitation of Robert DeNiro that deteriorates into parody, seemingly encouraged by DePalma, with overdone pauses between lines and actorish gestures between phrases.

As Eriksson, Michael J. Fox does his best, but it's a lightweight best. Besides, he suffers from DePalma's 19th-century-melodrama casting: if you want to show that one member of a group is morally superior to the others, put a clean-cut fellow in the good-guy role and put tough mugs in the others. The film might

If you didn't think that shaving could be sheer pleasure, try...

Brandsen™ Electric Wet Shaver

only \$12⁹⁵*

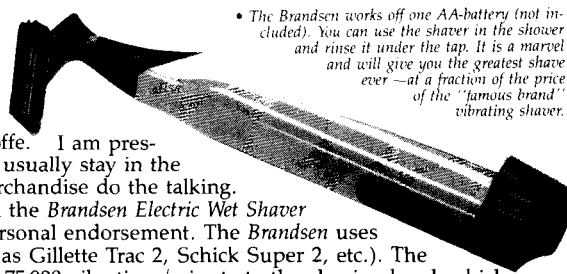
*But read this ad for an even better deal!

My name is Gerardo Joffe. I am president of Haverhills. I usually stay in the background and let our merchandise do the talking. But I am so enchanted with the *Brandsen Electric Wet Shaver* that I want to give it my personal endorsement. The *Brandsen* uses standard twin blades (such as Gillette Trac 2, Schick Super 2, etc.). The sealed micro-motor imparts 75,000 vibrations/minute to the shaving head, which gives you the most incredible shave you've ever imagined. The first time I shaved with it I couldn't believe it. Smooth as silk. Just exactly how all this happens isn't quite clear to me. I believe the ultra-rapid vibrations deliver the bristles to the beard at an especially favorable angle, or something equally esoteric. But whatever does it, it works. Marvelously!

We import the *Brandsen Electric Wet Shaver* in large quantities and can therefore bring it to you at the low price of just \$12.95. We use it as a "customer getter," as a means to increase our buyers' file by at least 25,000 names per month. But we have an even better deal. **Buy two for \$25.90, and we'll send you a third one, with our compliments—absolutely FREE!** And I believe so strongly that this will be a revelation to you that I personally give you this guarantee: If you are not totally delighted, do not return the razor. Drop me a note and say: "I didn't like it, and I've thrown it away." Your refund check/credit will be in the return mail. (Sorry, if you buy three, I'll have to ask you to send two of them back—unused, please!)

As the Godfather put it, this is an offer you can't refuse. There is no risk and no hassle, and you're in for a wonderful surprise. We can accept only mail orders, accompanied by check or money order, with this offer (no phone, no charge). Please write your name and address on a sheet of paper; also write "Code A042." Tell us how many *Brandsens* you want and include \$2.95 for one (1) and \$5.90 for three (3) *Brandsens* for postage and insurance (plus sales tax for CA delivery). Take advantage of this outstanding offer while it is available. You will be delighted! Mail to —————

• The *Brandsen* works off one AA-battery (not included). You can use the shaver in the shower and rinse it under the tap. It is a marvel and will give you the greatest shave ever—at a fraction of the price of the "famous brand" vibrating shaver.



since 1967
haverhills®

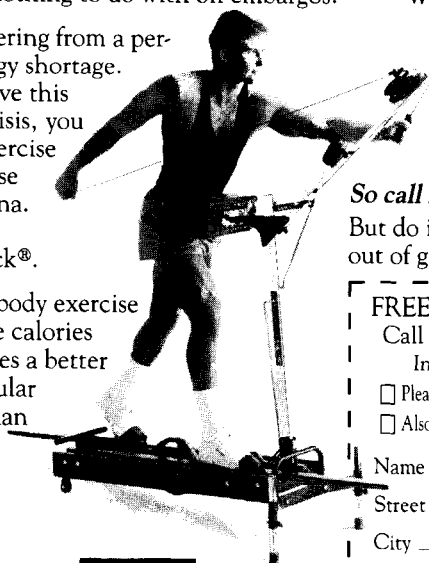
131 Townsend Street,
San Francisco, CA 94107

How to solve the energy crisis

If you're like a lot of Americans, the energy crisis has nothing to do with oil embargos.

You're suffering from a personal energy shortage. And to solve this growing crisis, you need to exercise and increase your stamina. You need a NordicTrack®.

This total body exercise burns more calories and provides a better cardiovascular workout than any other type of exercise machine.



NordicTrack
A CML COMPANY



With regular use, you'll feel stronger, more alert, and less stressed-out.

In short, you'll have more energy to do more things in your life.

So call NordicTrack.

But do it soon. Before you run out of gas for good.

FREE BROCHURE & VIDEO

Call Toll-Free 1-800-328-5888

In Canada 1-800-433-9582

☐ Please send me a free brochure.

☐ Also a free videotape. ☐ VHS ☐ BETA

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____

141 Jonathan Blvd. No., Chaska, MN 55318
225J9

have been marginally more interesting if Penn, tightly directed, had played Eriksen and someone credible as a rugged vet (like Tom Berenger in *Platoon*) had done the sergeant.

DePalma, ultimately responsible for all the above, is immediately responsible for the banalities of composition and motion—the slow, sentimental dissolves (in a supposedly hard-nosed picture), the silhouette shots of soldiers crossing ridges against the sunrise (militarily stupid and cinematically hoary). Some of the suspense intercutting—as when Fox is trapped, his legs having gone through the top of a Cong tunnel, while a Vietnamese crawls through the tunnel toward the dangling legs with a knife in his

mouth—would have embarrassed Edwin S. Porter, director of *The Great Train Robbery* (1903). Not one moment in the whole film shows an original or even keenly imitative eye. At best the direction is commonplace, at worst pretty dumb (a latrine sequence, for instance).

It seems a rule when writing about Vietnam films to place a new one in relation to others. Obediently, I note that two are still outstanding: *Hamburger Hill*, for its re-creation of combat hell, and *Platoon*, which transcends its schema to achieve what DePalma bungles—the moral transformation of men in war. DePalma is just a derivative Hollywoodnik who, in this case, hasn't even been able to bite off more than he can chew.

ing suggests a fully developed interpretation, strongly distinguished from other readings, and preferably in writing. For many of us, the difference between the word "reading" and the word "interpretation" has become impossible to define.

Hence anyone who wants to write the history of reading will find the late 20th century a maze to negotiate. The nature of reading itself seems to have changed. This change is so fundamental that it affects our very experience as readers, the place where we stand, or (to use the Greek for "stand upon") our *episteme*. No one is more affected by it than professional literary scholars. Collectively, as readers and critics of literature, in America in the waning years of this century, we rely on an assumption that separates us from the vast majority of readers in other times and other places. We teach it every day in every way: competitive reading. Indeed, it might be the name of our field. Not many of us compare literature on a regular basis, nor do we necessarily define ourselves by teaching "French." But as professionals we are all in the business of competitive reading.

Consider our teaching. During most of a student's early education, through high school, the aim of teaching is to enable young readers to read the way others do, at ordinary speed, with ordinary comprehension. The student tries to get the text *right*. This process culminates at the College Board Exams, where qualified readers pass the test by picking the one correct answer from a set of five. Hence reading consists of guessing how some other qualified reader has already read. Walking the straight and narrow path between the tempting lures of four misreadings, the chosen student finds the way to the college of his or her choice.

But there things change. We teachers liberate reading (or so many of us like to think) by pointing out that literary texts can, and should, be read in many different ways, that any of the choices in a multiple choice might be equally valid. We encourage students to find individual, original readings. Or so it appears to us. But many of them learn another lesson. They discover that reading is a competitive activity; that teachers champion different reading lists and different methods of reading; that readings position themselves in conflict or confutation or ridicule of other, inferior readings; and that good grades are awarded not to an ordinary description of an ordinary reading, but to readings that try to say something unusual, something new—the reading that curves or swerves, like a grading curve. The further the student advances, the more curves are needed, until finally,

The new academic sport.

Competitive Reading

BY LAWRENCE LIPKING

There was a time when reading seemed a simple matter. The author put a meaning into a text, the reader took it out again. Some nostalgic readers still dream of that model. When confronted by the fact that other people do not find the same meanings they do, they suspect them of lying or cheating. But scholars tend to offer a different explanation. Texts are not transparent, they point out, and what we find in a piece of writing depends on what we bring to it. Not even the author controls the sense of his words as they slide into constantly changing contexts. Modern critics have proved this point again and again. Reading is now a knotty and treacherous business.

In fact, it never was so monolithic. Many historians would agree with Robert Darnton that the history of reading furnishes vital keys to the self-understanding of the past. "As our ancestors lived in different mental worlds, they must have read differently, and the history of reading could be as complex as the history of thinking." But the history of reading is quite a new field, and when it comes to be written, the chapter on the late 20th century is likely to be the most

crucial, and the hardest to write. The contemporary splurge of theories of reading has made that history especially complex.

There are certainly plenty of volunteers for the post of Model Reader. When Roland Barthes proclaimed, 20 years ago, that "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author," he may not have succeeded in rubbing authors out, but he did help to initiate the Age of the Reader. Now we are deep in that age. Every new critical school, it seems, begins by taking the reader's part, defending his or her rights, improving the breed. The student may choose what sort of reader she wishes to be: responding or resisting, Marxist or psychoanalytic, implied or imperial, individual or institutional, hedonistic or ethical, constructing the text or deconstructing it. Even to list the number of schools seems unfair, since so many worthy theories must be ignored. Perhaps we even have too many theories of reading?

In any event, the hot debate about reading has not established much common ground for the most basic questions that a historian needs to ask. What is the field that I am studying? Just what is reading? Even ordinary usage reflects this problem. To a poet, a reading of "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" might suggest performing it aloud; to a member of the general public, looking the lines over with ordinary comprehension. But to a teacher or professor of literature, a read-

LAWRENCE LIPKING teaches English and comparative literature at Northwestern University. He is the author most recently of *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition* (University of Chicago Press).

in graduate school, the choice of reading differs so much from the texts that most other people have read, or the interpretation differs so much from earlier interpretations, that it becomes publishable. Then true competition begins. Having learned not to read like anyone else, the student is ready to teach.

If competitive reading rules the class, it dominates still more in the professional habitus of journal articles and books and grant proposals. Indeed, it is what most of us do for a living. Two sorts of competitive reading divide the field. The first pits one group of readings against another. Read *this*, says one professor—the books in my course, the books that belong to my school, the books I write about, *my* books—and save that other stuff for later. Professional success consists of getting other people to follow your agenda, to read and write about the books you read and write. The one with the most citations wins.

This aspect of the field is sometimes called canon-making, but the term tends to be misleading. A canon implies the winnowing of a list, the election of certain works from a full roster of candidates. But to anyone who pays attention to current controversies, nothing could be plainer than that most of the disputants have not read the works that the others are proposing. The apples of Paul Claudel vie with the oranges of Djuna Barnes. Comparative literature scholars understand this situation best; they do not pretend that they all talk the same languages or read the same books. Perhaps a comprehensive survey might uncover two dues-paying members of the field who have never read a single book in common. When they argue about the curriculum, should we really say they are debating the canon? It would be far more truthful to use the right label, and say that they are engaged in competitive reading.

The second sort of competitive reading is less significant, but better publicized. I refer, of course, to the conflict, or multiplication, of rival interpretations. This novel means this, not that; my reading can beat your reading. Most of what critics write conforms to this pattern. It seems an obsessive concern, a scandal of our period. Earlier generations were apparently much less impressed by the conflict of interpretations. Though disputes over texts like the Bible affected the lives of millions, and sometimes people proved the correctness of their readings by killing each other, most theologians and lawyers have thought that the invocation of a proper text would settle the argument, not stir it up.

Perhaps most people in the world still think so; they do not share our *episteme*.

The Koran is not subject to interpretation, and neither is *The Satanic Verses*, which means just what the Ayatollah says it does, whether or not he has read it. His inability to read the way we read must have been his blind spot. But our facility in reading as we read may be a blind spot, too. Through most of history, and over most of our planet even today, competitive reading has not been the normal mode. Not even professional arguers, like literary critics, employed it often in the past. Samuel Johnson was no stranger to disputation, nor was he afraid to pass judgment, yet he hardly ever paused to argue against someone else's reading. We do things differently now. For many of us, interpretation is agon; without opposition it would lose all its meaning, like a one-person prizefight. To read is to compete.

Am I exaggerating the difference between our moment of reading and the moments of the past? Doubtless, like everyone who uses the word *episteme*, I am. But consider how far our present notions have come from some notions generally approved in the recent past; recent enough, that is, to be the time when I myself was a student. I shall mention just three assumptions. Each once represented common wisdom, so common that it seemed the product not of thought but intuition. Today all three assumptions seem not merely problematical (everything, after all, is problematical) or logically vulnerable (many of our assumptions run counter to logic) but something far worse, far more serious: socially unacceptable. Even to say them out loud is embarrassing, like admitting to having voted for Nixon or smoking in public. Please do not believe that I would do such a thing. But some people, some perfectly respectable people, once did. Here, before the era of competitive reading, back in the early 1960s, is what they assumed.

The first assumption was spelled out by Sheldon Sacks, in explaining why he had no intention of offering any "spanking new reading" of any literary work:

There seems to me nothing more absurd than a new "key" to a work read by generations of readers who have reacted with pleasure to all its parts. For them to have "misunderstood" the work implies that the readers, the author, or the critic is insane, and if one is performing a critical task it is only decent to assume that the first two have their wits about them.

The whole idea of a "new reading" (which Sacks puts in quotation marks) strikes him as unforgivably pretentious, if not certifiably mad. Not many of my own teachers were this belligerent about new readings (Sacks's defensive tone proba-

From the author of
*The Man Who Mistook
His Wife for a Hat*

"In an extraordinarily moving and thought-provoking report, he scrutinizes the history of treatment of the deaf, investigates the expressive capabilities of sign language and gauges the linguistic and social pressures faced by deaf people. The closing section documents a 1988 student revolt at Gallaudet that led to the appointment of the school's first deaf president."
—*Publishers Weekly*

"Oliver Sacks, blessed with an understanding heart and poetic voice, speaks the language of the Deaf. More than their 'tongue' is 'heard'; it is their vision seen. An exquisite, as well as revelatory, work."
—Studs Terkel

"It is a wonderful book, full of unexpected information and animated by Oliver's personal insight. I have always thought of him as a poet of the afflicted and this book only adds to that feeling."
—Jeremy Bernstein

\$15.95 at bookstores
or order toll-free
1-800-822-6657
Visa/MasterCard only.



PHOTO: ALLEN FURBECK

SEEING
VOICES
A JOURNEY INTO THE WORLD OF THE DEAF
OLIVER
SACKS

University
of California
Press,
Berkeley
94720

bly indicates that he felt his assumption had already come under siege). But my teachers did convey, without trying, a certain amusement about the possibility that a student might say something new and true about the *Aeneid* or "Ode on a Grecian Urn." If the gods had singled out some young person for this revelation, then the gods were behaving with cosmic favoritism. It seemed unlikely.

If Sacks's disdain for "new reading" seems extreme, remember that it comes from the critic who founded *Critical Inquiry* in 1974. Moreover, it was largely why he founded it. Too many new readings had already accumulated, and the time had come for critics to do something more valuable: to examine assumptions. Theory would be the enemy of new reading. Its business would be not to promulgate fresh interpretations, but to restrain them. Or so it seemed at the time. That was not, of course, the way that the rise of theory (or *Critical Inquiry*) worked out. The solution turned out to be part of the problem, or rather the new assumption, that the competition of theories will generate endless new readings. One *episteme* had passed into another.

The second antique assumption I want to recall might also be derived from that passage in Sacks, which assumes that the validity of a new reading would falsify all past readings, or show them to be based on misunderstanding the work. Evidently only one reading can be *right*. For a forthright manifesto of this position, let us turn to a critic from a very different school, Robert Greer Cohn:

I should like to make plain . . . that I do not believe there are various possible interpretations of Mallarmé: this is a view held by individuals who do not, I am convinced, care much about Mallarmé or probably even art. . . . There is only *one* meaning to a Mallarmé poem, or any other authentic poem. True, the meaning may be exceedingly complex, polyvalent, ambiguous. . . . All this makes for added problems of interpretation, but it does not alter the basic condition of *integrity*, or authenticity, or inner harmony.

And nothing less than a complete and perfect reading, Cohn insists, can satisfy a critic who cares about poems. Hence integrity is required twice over, once for the poem and again for the reader. Ideally the two cooperate, and realize their goal when the harmony of the critic reflects in its totality the harmony of the text. As Eliot said of poets at their best, so one might say of critics: there is no competition.

Once again, a certain strain in Cohn's article of faith may indicate his suspicion that his values are imperiled. Perhaps

this insistence on integrity, in the mid-1960s, was already eccentric. Yet most critics still shared the assumption: a poem, at least an *authentic* poem, has only one meaning. During my own training, this assumption seemed to me to mark the most dramatic difference between generations. Most older scholars, even those who were flexible and undogmatic, believed in the possibility of finding the one right meaning.

But the *episteme* was changing. People of my generation were often content to point out three plausible readings, without choosing among them or synthesizing them into one. Poems do not obey Aristotelian logic; they can accommodate several contradictory meanings at the same time. I still belong to that generation (though sometimes I fear I am its only member). My students complain that I tell them there are three ways of looking at this, and end the class without telling them which of the three is right. This can be frustrating. For my students belong to a later generation, which takes for granted that no interpretation can be final, and that every reading may be essentially relative and arbitrary, but which likes very much to choose. For us, they might say, there is only the competition. An authentic reading, a competitive reading, are one and the same. That is the assumption on which they have grown.

My third outmoded assumption may be the most embarrassing of all. It accounts, in large measure, for the little wince or pang I often experience while rereading those critical passages that seemed, not so long ago, the most inspiring. *All* my teachers shared it. And nothing would be easier than holding up, to sniff at, some overripe specimen of the old rich rhetoric, like Helen Gardner's "The true critic does not extend a sceptre over the poet; he raises a torch to illumine the poem," or Henri Peyre's description of young Americans fired by the discovery that "great spirits now on earth are sojourning": "They revere the living writers, have acclaimed Kafka, Camus, Teilhard de Chardin; and the realization that the age of greatness had not passed irretrievably with Milton, Wordsworth, and Browning inspires them with the eager desire to follow and rival the geniuses now alive."

But this is too painful. Let me choose instead something more complex and belated, the notorious opening words of Geoffrey Hartman's essay of the early 1970s, "The Interpreter: A Self-Analysis": "*Confession*. I have a superiority complex vis-à-vis other critics, and an inferiority complex vis-à-vis art." Some reviewers complained that the first half

of this sentence rings truer than the second; and indeed, Hartman's later criticism has followed the line that critics should *not* consider themselves inferior to artists, that critics *are* artists. Still, I hear in Hartman a reverence problem. That is, like Gardner and Peyre, he tends to revere great works of art, and to make some version of that reverence the basis of his criticism.

In this he is outmoded. For reverence toward art or poetry is not our cup of tea. At the moment when Hartman wrote his sentence, he probably felt that the first half was rather daring, the second a graceful concession. Yet now the second half may cause the trouble. In an age when many young critics cultivate a hermeneutics of suspicion, when students often develop by learning to distrust and to struggle against their tendency to read the text in its own terms, a feeling of awe in the presence of art can seem critically disabling. What right has that thing without arms or head to tell us to change our lives? Better we should set it straight.

But an *episteme* is not merely a matter of logical arguments or theories. An emotion like reverence, or its absence, wells from something deeper, sources so omnipresent and diffuse we can hardly begin to define them. Whatever the cause, the days of reverent reading seem rather passé. Competitive reading has taken its place; competition not only with other readings, but with texts themselves. The notion that literature deserves reverence (or even, for that matter, that it ought to be called literature rather than writing) seems misplaced to younger critics—an example of what T. E. Hulme once named "spilt religion." By now most of that religion has spilled out. When we wrestle with texts, we know that what we touch is fallible and mortal.

Once something has spilt, as even Edmund Burke knew, there is no use crying over it. I do not intend to try to reverse the *episteme*. What could be more futile? Insofar as competitive reading does hold sway in the profession of letters, if not in the culture at large, it must be rooted not only in assumptions both conscious and unconscious, but in grounded conditions of economics and power. No one can tear those roots out. Moreover, a true *episteme* will control those who think they oppose it as well as those who think they own it. I certainly do not pretend to stand apart from what I am standing on.

Yet assumptions have consequences. Even if current methods of reading should prove to be irresistible, even if they carry us all along like a tidal wave, a thoughtful reader might still want to keep an eye on where she is going. What

REQUIRED READING



You know the art market is front-page news. But what the front page doesn't tell you is how, when, and where to find the art you seek.

ONE MAGAZINE DOES.

ART & AUCTION gives you a monthly calendar of auctions, exhibitions, and fairs throughout the world. It reports on the art market and analyzes the news. From antiquities to contemporary art, whether you're a seasoned collector or neophyte, ART & AUCTION educates, informs, and excites you.

SUBSCRIBE NOW.

Simply return the coupon.
Read ART & AUCTION
and get the whole picture.

Please complete this form and send
with payment to:

ART & AUCTION Magazine
Circulation Department
250 West 57th Street
New York, NY 10107

1 year (11 issues) \$36.00.
(Regularly \$42.00)
40% savings off newsstand

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

can those old, outmoded models of reading teach us about ourselves? What drawbacks might accompany the triumphs of competitive reading as it sweeps all before it?

Let me take each of those three archaic assumptions in turn. First, there is nothing more absurd than a "new reading" of a familiar old masterpiece. This view is clearly wrong. I know that, not only because the journals are currently full of such readings, but because I have produced some of them myself. Certainly I am not crazy. Yet I, and I alone, have been privileged to understand the end of the *Aeneid*, after two millennia during which no other reader seems to have gotten the point. I admit that this looks peculiar. But in the age of competitive reading such claims get made every day, and not only by other people. The question is, how does it happen?

In the case of the *Aeneid*, I think I can offer some pretty good reasons. First, though tens of millions of readers have studied the poem, not all that many have actually gotten to the end; and of these a good many have never published their interpretations; so my reading is probably only one in a million. But more important, these other readers did not possess the key. In my view this key depends on thinking about the history of reading, which I have already called a field only recently developed. I shall have to confine myself to a thumbnail sketch.

Briefly, the argument is this. Readers who have been disturbed or bewildered by the violence with which the *Aeneid* ends have not understood how to read like Virgil. The poet, as everyone knows, based the *Aeneid* largely on his reading of Homer, and the second half in particular on the *Iliad*. But how did Virgil read the end of that poem? He saw it through Roman eyes, not as the sentimental reconciliation of enemies but as the story of the return and proper burial of a body—the body of Hector, who, after due purification in the underworld, would live again in Rome. As Augustus officially reincarnated Aeneas, so Virgil's poem reincarnates the Homeric and Trojan past.

But Turnus, the enemy, will not be reborn. The brutal death of Turnus, in the last lines of the *Aeneid*, has tended to distract readers from a still more brutal implication, that his body will not be returned to his kin. That was what Turnus had begged Aeneas for: "pity old Daunus—in Anchises you had such a father—and send my lifeless body back to my people." But pious Aeneas refuses; in this poem Achilles and Priam will not get together. Hence the very last line, "and life, with a moan, fled indignantly below to the shades," suggests not only the bit-

terness but the *indignata* that Turnus's dishonored, unhallowed body will suffer. Critics have long argued about whether Virgil intended his poem to continue beyond this point. My reading implies a full closure: the foe of Aeneas closed for keeps in the ground. The Roman spirit will not abide any rival. It is as if Turnus's soul, like the soil of Carthage, were embedded in salt.

This reading is new and, as I believe, true. How has it escaped all previous readers? I think I can answer that, too. To begin with, I must allow that a few other readers have read the poem the same way: Virgil, Augustus, and most of their contemporaries. It ought to have been obvious to them, too obvious to bother publishing. In this respect my reading is quite weak—not a misreading at all, let alone a strong misreading, in Harold Bloom's terms, but only weakly, historically correct.

Or such is my claim. Its strength, however, consists of rejecting the Christianized Virgil—Virgil Father of the West—who has dominated interpretation at least since Augustine. The original reading could not survive the loss of another *episteme*: the habits of reading among those who were used to the worldview of reincarnation. When we lost those habits, we also lost the key to opening Virgil. But now at last the key has been rediscovered. Those other readers were wrong, my reading is right. Competitive reading has triumphed.

Yet what does my reading leave out? In an age of competitive reading, this question is hard to ask; it interrupts my exercise in self-congratulation. But perhaps it also allows those other readers back in. For I do not think that all their readings of the *Aeneid* amounted to nothing, any more than the *Aeneid* itself amounts to no more than a series of clever interpretations. It has made people feel, it has made them laugh and cry, it has made them admire, it has made them depressed. Many readers, in fact, hate the end of the *Aeneid*, and I will not call that a misreading. Perhaps the attention paid to the death of Turnus in recent years responds to guilty sensations about colonialism and the Vietnam War, perhaps the glory of Rome and its reincarnation has worn out its welcome, perhaps Virgil himself was not all that happy about the death of Turnus.

So competitive critics would say, and maybe they are misinterpreting. But my reading does not have much to say to them. It affects only a point of interpretation, not the experience of reading the poem; and to confuse the one with the other seems to me the characteristic blind spot of the age of competitive read-

ing. I think that is what Sheldon Sacks meant when he attacked the idea of "new readings." Old epics consist of more than their themes: they still have the power to move us. Readers know this, of course, but competitive readers tend to put it aside. To be worked on by the power of the text reduces the reader to a member of the audience, one among many whose laughing and crying affect one another to laugh and cry together. That is not the right mood for competitive reading. When we want to say something critically new, it goes against our interest to be moved. My reading of the end of the *Aeneid* does not tell a reader how to feel. This seems to me good sense, but also the mark of a boundary beyond which new readings, competitive readings, seldom pass. A certain heartlessness informs our readings. The *episteme* of our time favors the scrappy.

Turn now to the second outmoded assumption: there is only one meaning to any authentic poem. Again, I know this is false. But a peculiar thing happened to me last year on my way to a class in literary criticism. The topic that day was indeterminacy, or the way that poems can sustain any number of equally plausible meanings; and the class had been assigned five critical essays on Emily Dickinson 754: "My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun—." This seemed to me an ideal choice, for two reasons. First, in the decade since Adrienne Rich declared "I think that for us, at this time, it is a central poem in understanding Emily Dickinson, and ourselves, and the condition of the woman artist," no other American poem had been subjected to so many, and such urgent, interpretations. But second, despite the plethora of readings, I believed that the poem remained a riddle to which no one, including me, had found the solution. It starts this way:

My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun—
In Corners—till a Day
The Owner passed—identified—
And carried me away—

And now We roam in Sovereign Woods—
And now We hunt the Doe—
And every time I speak for Him—
The Mountains straight reply—

For three more stanzas the Gun hunts with the Master, guards His head, and slaughters His foes. Violent, but intriguing. Yet then the poem reaches its climax not in a further action but in a dark and bewildering paradox:

Though I than He—may longer live
He longer must—than I—
For I have but the power to kill,
Without—the power to die—

What does it mean? I shall not rehearse the dozens of recent answers.

many of them brilliant, except to note the inevitable, that each critic reads it as an illustration of his or her main thesis about Dickinson: to Rich, the struggle of the woman poet against the (masculine) Genius of Poetry; to the Jungian, the female psyche's empowerment by its animus; to the biographical critic, a report on Dickinson's marriage. All the better for my purposes. In indeterminacy week, what could be more useful than a sphinx without a secret, a poem in which everyone's reading was just as good as everyone else's?

Then something awkward happened. I read one more critic, Cynthia Griffin Wolff, and she solved the riddle:

Who am "I," and who is "He"? To an Amherst audience, even as late as Emily Dickinson's day, the answers would probably have been patent: death and Christ. Death "may" live longer than Christ, for Christ died on the cross; yet Christ "must" live longer than death, for the righteous cannot be raised from their graves unless Christ first vanquishes death.

Once again, an awareness of the history of reading can expose a blind spot in contemporary readings. As soon as we entertain the possibility that the speaker of the poem is not Emily Dickinson but a personified Death, all the details begin to make sense. I cannot review all the evidence for Wolff's solution, nor am I so unfashionable as to agree with everything she says; but essentially I think she is right.

"Right" is an untimely category. Certainly it did not fit indeterminacy week. I did the best I could, pointing out to my students that each of the other essays also had interest and merit and in a sense all readings were equal, though one might be more equal than others. Perhaps they bought it. Perhaps I do. Readings of the poem that identify the speaker with Emily Dickinson are not, after all, all wrong; to write these lines she had to imagine herself with the power to kill. Yet to accept Wolff's reading, not just theoretically but in the more basic sense of having to see the poem her way, means having to discard a good many (though not all) of the other readings as, shall we say, rather too ingenious. Or, shall we say, just plain wrong.

In the age of competitive reading, however, this embarrassing situation has a happy outcome: the fact that someone may have solved the riddle of Dickinson's poem does not make much difference. New readings continue to be published; new interpretive cruxes are found to require new keys; and Wolff's rendition takes its place as only one more among the almost limitless number of

candidates for attention. The idea that it might settle the argument about the poem seems hopelessly naive. Our institutions ensure us against any such freezing of the text. Like *Lear* and *Ulysses*, one can safely predict, Dickinson 754 is going to keep on the bubble for a long time to come.

This sounds like good news for those who have yet to publish. Competitive reading does guarantee them a future. But there is a price to pay: they will never be able to convince anyone else for long. Our institutions do not function for persuasion, for agreement. Indeed, it seems that reading itself has been devalued. The tendency to equate all close reading with the New Criticism, as if paying attention to the unique particulars of a text were itself a sign of antiquarianism (what in the old days might have been called "the attentional fallacy"), does seem to mark a growing resistance to reading, or a least to other people's readings. Competitors do not like to watch one another, except to spy out a weakness. This may not be the best attitude for reading. Moreover, it leads to interpretive schizophrenia, since even critics who scorn the notion of the one right reading, when they enter the arena, defend the rightness of their own. Such schizophrenia is not to be cured. It has become our second nature.

Nor should one underestimate the amount of hostility directed toward texts themselves, those monoliths that bar the way to free passage. Each time the poet clarifies his meaning, he interferes with ours. Competitive reading must find techniques to get around this. It has done this very well. Having had occasion recently to look at a dozen readings of Wordsworth's famous "Ode," I was struck by how inventively each had managed to interpret it without once using the words "intimations" and "immortality." Those words are tarnished, of course—not only because they reveal the poet's gullibility in believing things we do not believe, but also because so many readers have used them before. Competitive readers prefer to cultivate a certain forgetfulness.

Nor do they acknowledge the poet's authority over the poem. When Wordsworth tried to explain his ode by giving it a new title, when he argued that "a Reader who has not a vivid recollection of these feelings having existed in his mind cannot understand the poem," perhaps he was engaging in unfair restraint of trade. The New Critics took this sort of point quite well. We must trust, they said, not the poet but the Poem Itself. But today our lack of trust extends to the poem. Why not instead read the text *against* itself?

I come back to my third outmoded assumption: that great works of art deserve our reverence. Not long ago the very mention of certain names inspired a sort of hush; Dante and Shakespeare were revered in the act of pronunciation. Since then, however, many critics have learned to pronounce Shakespeare differently. *The Tempest*, for instance, no longer sug-

Call for any book

- Immediate shipment worldwide.
- Credit cards or check. • Ask about our overnight gift delivery nationwide. • Free monthly New Title Forecast. • Mail orders welcome.
- Open 24 hours every day.



1-800-255-2665

In CT or Worldwide (203) 966-5470

59 Elm Street, New Canaan, CT 06840



HOME STUDY COURSE

in economics. A 10-lesson study that will throw light on today's baffling problems. Tuition free—small charge for materials.

Write Henry George Institute, 121 E. 30th Street, New York, NY 10016

CLASSIC T-SHIRTS!

Beethoven, Hemingway, Da Vinci, Jung, JFK, Mozart, Shakespeare, Cheshire Cat, Iwan, Darwin, Van Gogh, Gandhi, Nietzsche, Poe, Thoreau, Austen, Sherlock Holmes, others.

T-Shirt: (white or lt. blue) \$12.25, 4/\$44

Sweatshirt: (white or grey) \$21, 2/\$40

Sizes: S, M, L, XL. Ship: \$2.00 per order

Illustrated brochure: 75¢

Historical Products, Box 220 CW



Cambridge, MA 02238

HOW TO EXECUTE AN AGENCY

by E. Waterhouse Allen

Wicked, informed satire about Bureaucratic Types you should recognize! Distilled from 50 years work in human service agencies. 1st edit., \$3.95.

BARK-BACK

P.O. Box 235, Glenshaw, PA 15116.

OKAY, POLAND. You're doing fine so far. But we'll believe it for real when you have a wave of McCarthyism. And don't try to tell us there aren't any Communists in the Polish State Department.

For an introductory 15-issue subscription to NATIONAL REVIEW for just \$17.95, call 800-222-6806.

gests a benevolent, magical authority, but a colonialist, misogynistic mystification that indicts the playwright along with the whole civilization that has worshiped and capitalized on his fame. In stage productions, nowadays, Caliban often replaces Prospero as the hero. Indeed, not a few directors and readers seem to think themselves superior to Shakespeare, at least on moral and ideological grounds. The power he exerted depends on illusion; and as soon as we withhold our reverence, it melts into air.

Shakespeare can still take care of himself. Like any playwright, he needs to be produced to stay alive and, considering his treatment of earlier works of art, I do not think he would have been distressed to find his plays adapted, rehabilitated, transmogrified, or even calibanized. He asks us to respond, not to revere. In this respect, veneration is only a historical accident that overtook his work. But there are other poets who seem to me different. They *do* ask for reverence; and when their poems are denied it, the poetic effect can wither. Two such poets are Wordsworth and Rilke. To care for their work at all, a reader must be willing to suspend not only disbelief but other ordinary human reactions—for instance, a sense of humor—and breathe a finer, more angelic air.

Yet I myself am an apostate. In a recent book on the figure of the abandoned woman, I cast a cold eye on much-revered poems by Wordsworth, St. John of the Cross, and Rilke, and asked some

questions that tend to break their spell. What are the motives of men who impersonate women? What do such poets get from their sympathy? To raise the issue of John's fascination with female orgasm, or Rilke's gift for getting women to pay him for leaving them, is rather like raising one's voice in church, or putting something unmentionable on the altar. Some of my readers, in fact, have been offended. Others might object to a lingering trace of reverence for great poetry that they spy, not mistakenly, amid the desecration.

I welcome this mixed response. It is just my sense that these poets are wonderful, after all, that makes it so exhilarating to hold them to account like other human beings, and to perceive the strains that so much art went to conceal. And almost every reader of Wordsworth has wanted, at some point, to make fun of him. Ideally these reactions, like a lovers' quarrel, can clear the air, and perhaps even speak some home truths that people who love less strongly are afraid to bring into the open, lest they end the relationship. True love begins where phony reverence stops.

But competition puts an end to love. Can anyone *understand* the *Spiritual Cantic* or the *Duino Elegies* without submitting to their spirit of longing, without abandoning the skepticism, the holding back, that marks so much contemporary reading? I do not think it can be done. Indeed, it is not an uncommon experience to come across published criticism that seems totally insensitive to the spirit of a work of art, as if a colorblind person were to describe a Cézanne. I should not be surprised to hear that a Carmelite or Rilkean viewed my own readings of John or Rilke that way.

To the lover, all who fail to see the object of love as he or she does are surely myopic. And the lover, as William James points out, is always right, for the lover is motivated to note and to vibrate to every particle of the loved one's being. John knows Christ so much better than most of us do, as Wordsworth knows nature and Rilke knows the invisible part of things, precisely because their love and devotion fix their attention so fiercely. Withholding reverence is not in their power; and when they lavish reverence on what they love, a great access of power is their reward. Competitive readers cannot enter there. A world

of poetry is always closed to them.

Nor can irreverence be sustained through every phase of reading. At times we all succumb. The feminist who brilliantly explodes the cult of hero worship on one page, indulges on the next in heroine-worship. Even nihilists have heroes. A sort of displaced, half-acknowledged reverence for those who have voyaged furthest into the zones of ontological insecurity seems to me one of the defining characteristics of post-modern theory. It can also be dangerous. Witness the posthumous controversy about Paul de Man; both sides deny his mere humanity. Yet nothing shamed his disciples more than discovering how much reverence they felt. Not even deconstruction could inoculate them against the virus of unskeptical devotion.

But I have said enough against competitive reading. For even if our *episteme* does cut us off from one of the pleasures of reading, the sense of unconditional oneness with another person, it is still, after all, our own. And now as never before, the world is ready to see some value in competition. If the readings I have been describing might be characterized from a socialist point of view as the inevitable result of a decadent cutthroat scholarly capitalism, or as a Hobbesian war of all against all, we do not need to see that as disaster. A healthy rivalry can stir our trade and get the juices going. Nor does the socialist dream of unified, collective reading ring true in a polyglot and pluralist world. Whom would we delegate to hold the keys of the kingdom of reading? Better far to throw the keys away.

We pay a price for giving up the dream of harmony. In some respects our way of reading does distort the processes of mutual understanding that have seemed a necessary part of reading throughout history and may well seem that way again in the future. The history of reading will have to acknowledge that the habits of our time may be only a phase. Yet competition does wake people up. I do not think it an accident that only in the age of competitive reading did the notion of a scholarly history of reading first begin to take shape. When so many rival models of reading fight to be noticed, when so many readers like to deny that their ways of interpreting have anything in common with other people's, when so many scholars are forced to notice that some of their disagreements are beyond resolution, a historian cannot help perceiving that a similar pandemonium echoes through the past.

There are worse ways to think of the

Weeds

The pigrush, the poverty grass,
The bindweed's stranglehold morning glories,
The dog blow and ninety-joints—
They ask so little of us to start with,
Just a crack in the asphalt,
Or a subway grate with an hour of weak light.
One I know has put down roots
As far as a corpse is buried, its storage stem
As big as my leg. That one's called
Man-under-ground. That one was my grudge.

And suddenly now this small
Unlooked for joy. Where did *it* come from,
With these pale shoots
And drooping lavender bell? Persistent
Intruder, whether or not
I want you, you've hidden in the heart's
Overworked subsoil. Hacked at
Or trampled on, may you divide and spread,
Just as, all last night,
The wind scattered a milkweed across the sky.

J. D. McCLATCHY

world, to think of the past, than as not one but many. Reading always did occur in time. The past is many foreign countries; they like to argue there. And argument, at least, our age is well equipped to

participate in. I think it is premature to declare a truce. If we are better at competition than comprehension, perhaps history will judge us by the fruitfulness of our conflicts.

travel, and a revelation of literary gifts that go well beyond those Kennan already displayed in his memoirs and in his historical writings.

The sketches also serve as a reminder of Kennan's style of thought. Intellectually, he is an impressionist, proceeding by small touches of color and subtle changes of shading. He is not a systematic thinker, in the manner of Hans Morgenthau. In his many scholarly works, in his collected lectures and his historical studies, Kennan has rather elusively articulated his views on world affairs, on the relations among states, on power, on human nature. He has been especially given to paradox—to two paradoxes in particular.

The first paradox concerns the containment policy itself. Despite the distortion of his thinking that Kennan came to deplore, despite the failures that resulted from the mechanical application, against his own advice, of the concept of containment to such unrewarding areas as China and Vietnam, despite the excessive reliance on nuclear weapons that he has so eloquently condemned, despite the transformation of a call for a multinational enterprise into a rationale for American expansion and hegemony, despite all the fuzzy edges of his thought—despite all this, Kennan's formulation of 1946-47 has turned out to be basically correct.

Perhaps he made Soviet expansionism appear more systematic and less opportunistic than it was; but Soviet expansionism *did* exist. (Moreover, it could hardly be accounted for, as the revisionists have tried to do, by purely defensive motives.) On the other hand, Kennan stressed that "Soviet power, unlike that of Hitlerite Germany, was neither schematic nor adventuristic." Above all, he did not diabolize the Soviets, or concede to them more power or competence than they possessed. He warned against believing that "success of the Soviet system, as a form of internal power, is . . . finally proven." Containment had two aims: to deprive the Soviets of easy successes abroad, and to buy time until the domestic weaknesses of the Soviet system began to undermine its vigor and its authority.

In the *Foreign Affairs* article, Kennan referred to the "neglect or abuse" of Soviet agriculture, the production of consumer goods, housing, and transportation. In 1952, as ambassador in Moscow, he noted the population's detachment from the system, and the increasing stratification of Soviet society. In 1947 he had already written about "a dangerous congealment of political life in the higher circles of Soviet power," and wondered whether "the eventual rejuvenation of the higher spheres of authority" might not eventual-

Mr. X

BY STANLEY HOFFMANN

Sketches from a Life by George F. Kennan

(Pantheon, 365 pp., \$22.95)

George Kennan and the Dilemmas of U.S. Foreign Policy by David Mayers

(Oxford University Press, 402 pp., \$32.50)

Kennan and the Art of Foreign Policy by Anders Stephanson

(Harvard University Press, 380 pp., \$35)

George F. Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast by Walter L. Hixson

(Columbia University Press, 352 pp., \$32)

If ever there was a rich field of paradoxes, it is George Kennan. His role as a shaper of American foreign policy was brief. His famous Long Telegram from Moscow, in which he outlined his interpretation of Soviet behavior and his view of containment, was written in 1946; he became head of policy planning in the State Department in 1947, and resigned from the post in 1950. His two ambassadorships, to the Soviet Union in 1952 and to Yugoslavia in 1961-63, were fiascoes. And yet more studies have been written about this extraordinary American than about many far more powerful figures in American diplomacy. The fascination with Kennan is owed, no doubt, to the importance of containment, which became the rationale of American policy for more than 40 years; to the extraordinary story of Kennan's own reservations about the way in which his recommendations were carried out; to the intellectual evolution that led him to become an eloquent critic, first of the Vietnam War and later of America's nuclear policies; to the power and the prestige of his elegant and subtle literary style.

Now Kennanology, if one may coin the awkward word, is receiving a new impe-

tus. There is a new crop of books, the most important, of course, being Kennan's own volume of excerpts from his extraordinary diaries. *Sketches from a Life* deals with "a variety of scenes, places, and landscapes" and with the emotions they evoked in him. This stunning collection of fragments begins in 1927, when Kennan was 24, and ends in 1988. They deal with cities, Hamburg and Leningrad in particular; with visits to his beloved rural Wisconsin, where he was born; with journeys on his sailboat along the coasts of Denmark and Norway; with expeditions into Africa and Mexico, into the countryside of the Soviet Union and into parts of America where he feels, it seems, even less at home, such as California and Florida.

These pieces are sumptuously written. They are like music and like painting; they have the deep tone of a melancholy cello, and the admiring reader is not surprised to discover that in his travels Kennan often carried a sketchbook. His keen talent of observation, his sense of the mood of a place, his evocation of light and shadow, his love of ports and monuments, make these writings, quite apart from the ideas that inform them, a remarkable addition to the literature of

ly divide the Party and reveal "the chaos and weakness of Russian society"—a society that, having "never known spontaneity or collective action," might "be changed overnight . . . to one of the weakest and most pitiable of national societies." He added, in the article of '47, that this view could be neither proved nor disproved, but that there was a strong possibility that Soviet power "bears within it the seeds of its own decay."

It took almost half a century, but in Gorbachev's era the cautious predictions of Kennan have been largely vindicated. The current crisis of the Soviet system and of Soviet society results from the internal weaknesses that Kennan had spotted, and from the costs imposed by Soviet expansionism. (One of those costs was the need to match, and in some areas to exceed, Western military might.)

In 1948, and again 1957, in expressing his desire for reconciliation in Europe and its emancipation from the grip of the superpowers, Kennan argued for German reunification and for a withdrawal of Soviet and American forces from the heart of the European continent (ideas proposed by Walter Lippmann in 1947). It may be that he failed to take into account the interest that both superpowers had, by 1948, in controlling "their" respective Germanys. If it is true that a reunified and demilitarized Germany would have gravitated toward the United States, it is easy to see why the Soviets showed as little interest in the scheme as the stability-minded Truman and Eisenhower. Yet as the Soviet position in Eastern Europe disintegrates, as West Germany enjoys increasing legitimacy in the European Community and exerts increasing influence on its Eastern neighbors (something Kennan foresaw), the chimera of reunification may well turn out to have been prophetic—even if one is still far away from a single Germany and a unified Europe, even if Europe will be neither demilitarized nor endowed with the Swiss-type militias that Kennan favored.

When Kennan now maintains that the policy of containment is obsolete because it was devised against a very different Soviet Union, he is right. But he fails to note that it was precisely the success of the policy, at least in those areas that Kennan himself finally defined as vital for the United States (Europe, Japan, the Middle East), that helped, in the long run, to transform Soviet policy and Soviet power. Moreover, Kennan's emphasis, since the late 1950s, on the need to negotiate with the Soviets, especially for the control of nuclear weapons, has been entirely justified, for these negotiations have been one of the instruments in the

relative opening of the Soviet Union to the outside world, in the emergence of a generation of Soviet political leaders who compared with dismay the performance of their society and that of the other leading industrial nations.

The startling changes in Soviet foreign and military policy under Gorbachev, the new possibilities for cooperation between the superpowers, and the risks of chaos in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union itself all require a dramatically new foreign policy for the United States. Kennan himself has called for one. But if it would be foolish, out of habit and out of fear of the unknown, to cling to containment, it would be equally foolish to ignore its achievements, especially in Europe.

The second paradox about George Kennan is that his eminent intellectual service to America was provided by a man profoundly alienated from American values and American mores. His sketches in his diaries are run through—as early as December 1927, when he is reading *Buddenbrooks*—by an overwhelming nostalgia for the past. The past holds two ideals for Kennan: the rural idyll of Wisconsin (or of the "English home," that "coldest and yet coziest of places," to which he devoted a poem while flying over England in 1949), and the aristocratic decorum of the 18th century, before the "age of the democratic revolutions." Within the sophisticated diplomat and scholar is still a young man, no, a boy, fascinated by the time "when a visit was a matter of months . . . when foreign countries were still foreign, when a vast part of the world always bore the glamour of the great unknown."

This son of middle-class parents has an unshakable longing for aristocratic societies. (In Czechoslovakia in 1938, Kennan thought, in David Mayers's phrase, that "the absence of an aristocratic element amounted to a fatal handicap.") Kennan shows a powerful distaste for the disorderliness, the materialism, and the special interests of democracy, and a faith in the virtues of elites. In the 1930s he wanted a foreign service academy whose students would wear uniforms and work on farms in the summer. In the 1970s he argued for a pool of 500 to 1,000 outstanding people, appointed by a "detached and austere authority such as the Supreme Court."

The cultural consequences of this profound nostalgia are revealed in his sketches. He hates the automobile, whose occupants have "no connection in the social sense with the highway over which they were driving." He hates air travel and airports. He looks at modern cities as huge and sinister disaster areas ("a fine end-of-the-world we have created in the American city"). The destruction of the environment is the forerun-

ner of the disintegration of society. By having yielded to "the industrial revolution, the social revolution, the self-inflicted wounds" of the world wars, Europe has repudiated its past, "lost control of its own destiny," and become "the helpless addict of its own self-indulgent habits." America, wasting its "magnificent" natural resources, and with a talented intelligentsia "silenced or shouted by the commercial media," is "essentially a tragic country."

All over the world, Kennan laments, "we older people are the guests of this age." (This was written when he was 55.) Three adolescents he saw "half-hidden in the shadows" of a ruined cathedral in Berlin in 1960 were "the embodiment of man's lost and purposeless state, his loneliness, his helplessness, his wistfulness, and his inability to understand." And 16 years later he wrote in *Die Zeit* about the "poor old West: succumbing feebly, day by day, to its own decadence, sliding into debility on the slime of its own self-indulgent permissiveness, its drugs, its crime, its pornography, its pampering of the youth, its addiction to its bodily comforts, its rampant materialism and consumerism."

What does man, this fallen creature, need politically? In the spiritual sphere, Kennan celebrates the role of religion in preserving a sense of moral order, "drawn up by those who are wiser and more experienced than the great masses of humanity." "For many people," he writes, "it is always better that there should be some moral law, even an imperfect or entirely arbitrary one, than there should be none at all." In the temporal sphere, Kennan believes that man needs a government that maintains order and authority without interference from special interests, that prosecutes foreign policy without parliamentary meddling. In a manuscript of 1938, he complained about the perversion of universal suffrage by bosses and lobbies, and he proposed disfranchising naturalized citizens, blacks, and women. Kennan is sympathetic to the pre-1789 and pre-1914 aristocratic governments; he celebrates their glamour and style and contrasts their achievements with the modern "politics of envy." Under their aristocratic rulers, Kennan writes, the poor could have gained "a twinge of hope" from "the knowledge that to live well is at least theoretically a possibility." This he prefers to the ideal of the welfare state, which is, in his formulation, "not that more people should live really well but that no one should."

In the 1930s Kennan displayed some admiration for the authoritarian governments of Dollfuss in Austria and Salazar

in Portugal. His distaste for Nazism was based on, of all things, his belief that it was the extreme result of mass democracy and democratic nationalism. (After the war he argued against imposing Western democracy on Germany, fearing it would lead to a dictatorship of the left.) This political worldview explains also his respect for Wilhelmine Germany, with its strong executive, its active social policy (aimed at satisfying the workers without giving them real power), its fine universities. His studies of European diplomacy during and after Bismarck have a strongly pro-German and anti-Russian slant.

There is, in all of this, much that is wrong, unrealistic, and offensive. At home, Kennan's sense of hierarchy has made him extraordinarily deaf to the demands of minorities and women, and to the sensible aspects (other than the environmentalist ones) of the student movement of the 1960s. Abroad, this man for whom home "was the whole great arc of the northern and western world, from Moscow across Scandinavia and the British Isles to Wisconsin" has been contemptuous of Africa and Latin America, ardently pro-British during Britain's clashes with Arab and Iranian nationalism, and (though critical of the methods of South African racism) strangely indulgent toward apartheid. Moreover, while many of his frequent laments about democracies' inability to pursue foreign policy effectively are close to the mark, the Vietnam War, which he opposed, should have given him pause: this was a disaster planned by the executive and launched in part by obtaining the abdication of Congress. Similarly, in nuclear matters, the public has been ahead of the elites.

The best of the new critical studies of Kennan is by David Mayers, a young political scientist who has succeeded in writing a thoughtful study of Kennan's long career that is entirely fair, critical yet scrupulous. Mayers is particularly sharp in his review of Kennan's Platonic (and platonic) ideas of 1938 about American institutions, and about Kennan's "lack of generosity" toward the countries of the

Third World, which he believes will only waste the aid that they receive from us. Mayers's concluding chapter, on the nature and the roots of Kennan's conservatism and realism, is convincing in placing him at the end of a tradition that "stretches from John Williams to Reinhold Niebuhr and Walter Lippmann, and includes Roger Williams, Alexander Hamilton, John Quincy Adams, and some of the more notable mugwumps."

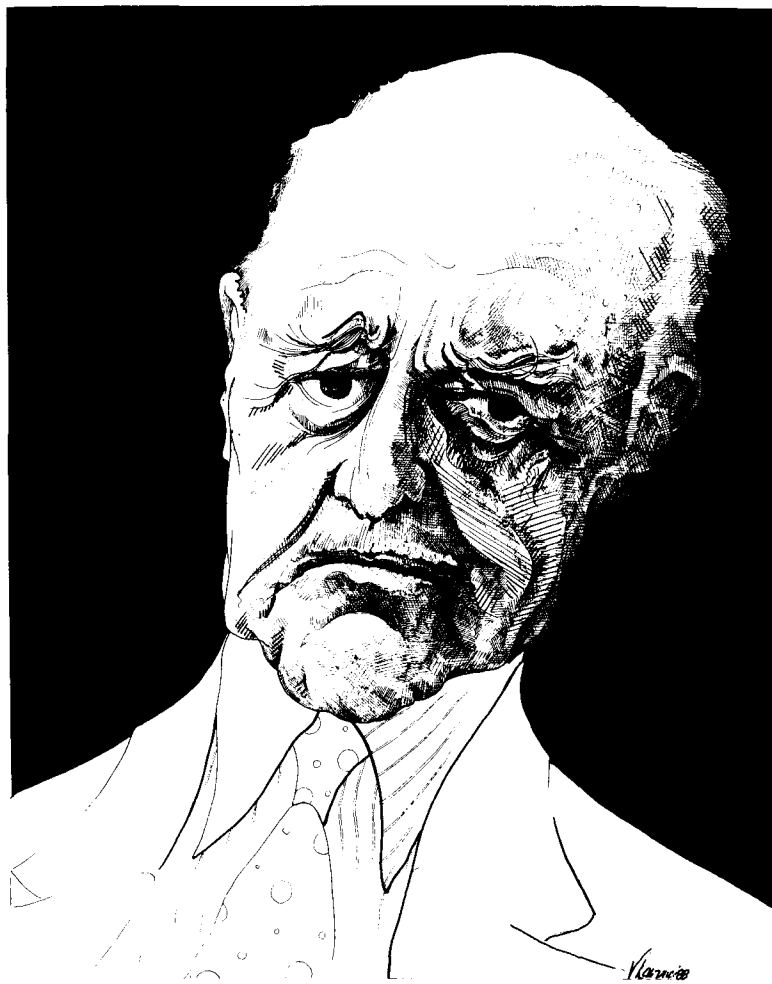
Anders Stephanson describes himself as "a neutralist Swede of socialist conviction." Like Mayers, he points out that

his criticism of Kennan's view of Soviet power as excessively "teleological," that it is determined by the essence of the system rather than by its interaction with the outside world—are a bit farfetched, as is his idea that Kennan's emphasis on the importance of America's domestic health undermines his traditional view of international relations.

Stephanson wishes to place Kennan in a family of 20th-century "organistic conservatives," in the company of such romantic enemies of capitalism and mass culture as Ortega y Gasset, Eliot, Pound, Lawrence, and Wyndham Lewis; but the attempt is less convincing than his remarks about the influence on Kennan's thinking of Midwestern progressivism, with its elitist faith in the rule by experts, and its dislike of city bosses. Worst of all, Stephanson's book is marred by a lot of heavy breathing, and by fashionable name dropping. Althusser and Barthes are hardly germane to American foreign policy in the 20th century, or to Kennan's views of it; and neither is Wittgenstein. And Kennan's use of style, he tells us, "can be recast . . . as a part of the process of inventing a place for the subject through the construction of some sort of narrative," a "structuralist thesis" that then leads to two perfectly pedantic diagrams. Stephanson keeps accusing Kennan of having failed to analyze adequately Soviet ideology and its relation to foreign policy, but his own appendix on ideology is no improvement over the

Long Telegram and Mr. X's article in *Foreign Affairs* in 1947 (though it does add such occult things as "master discourse" and "metalanguage" to the discussion). Too bad. One is stimulated by Stephanson's iconoclasm and irritated by his pretentiousness.

Walter Hixson has a thesis, too. He makes the case that Kennan, who became a critic of the militarization and the globalization of containment, was himself, in 1946-47, responsible for those excesses. There is indeed much evidence for the argument that Kennan, in the early years of the cold war, was deeply worried about American credibility, and about the pos-



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Kennan, even in his years of public service, changed his views on a number of subjects: on the proper fate of Germany, on the definition of America's vital interests around the world. More than Mayers, he concentrates on ferreting out the contradictions in Kennan's thought, especially about the scope and the necessity of Soviet expansionism, about the Kremlin's relations with foreign Communist parties, about the respective doses of fanaticism and pragmatism in Soviet behavior. Some of these criticisms of Kennan's conceptual rigor are shrewd. Others—his dismissal of the relevance of notions of balance of power,

sible bandwagon effect of Communist victories in Greece, or Italy, or South Korea. Hixson is also persuasive in his observation that Kennan's opinions in 1946-47 (which included deep skepticism about joint Western and Soviet control over Germany) doomed his later plan to reunify Germany and to overcome the division of Europe.

Still, even in his hard-line days, Kennan was dubious about military interventions by the United States. He preferred a geographically more restricted NATO. It was precisely Kennan's desire for an independent center of power on the European continent—as John Lewis Gaddis put it, “his growing preference for a multipolar over a bipolar postwar order”—that led him to draft a plan for a neutral and unified Germany. Hixson exaggerates the contradiction between Kennan's anti-democratic values and his anti-communism. According to Hixson, the former led Kennan to doubt the capacity of his country to have a coherent foreign policy, whereas the latter led him to want global containment. But the fact is that Kennan never wanted global containment. Hixson tends to fall too easily into the clichés of the cold war revisionists of the early 1970s. (His idea of a possible immediate postwar settlement is “economic assistance to Russia and agreement on Soviet neutralization of the Near East in return for a U.S.-sponsored neutralization of the Far East, whereupon both nations might have withdrawn from Central Europe and attempted to come to terms on atomic weapons.” Easier said than done.) But Hixson's final view of Kennan as a forerunner of the current “decline school”—in his concern about social health in America, about the environment, about military overstretch—is stimulating.

Kennan's biographers have all tried to list the influences that have weighed on his thinking. They count Gibbon, no friend of democracy; Burke, and his dislike of quick change and abstract thought; Niebuhr; Hamilton; Tocqueville, at his most dyspeptic. (Tocqueville, however, thought that democracy was both inevitable and redeemable.) Stephanson is quite correct in remarking both that Kennan's conservative appeal to prudence clashed with his utopian notions of drastic institutional reform, and that Kennan overlooked the capacity of U.S. foreign policy makers to “execute with force and expedition.”

Kennan's is a strange conservatism. It is violently opposed to what passes for conservatism in the United States, that is, to the defense of big business and laissez-faire. It is a mixture of genuine feeling for nature and of the synthetic idealization of a mythical past, of anti-individualism and a passionate defense

of individual rights. (The latter made him confront Joseph McCarthy once the senator from Wisconsin turned on the foreign service. Hixson has a good chapter on this.) How could this strange conservatism have become the voice of a national consensus on containment? How could this “expatriate from the Wisconsin of the first years of this century” have turned out to be one of the great strategists of a political system he disliked and made so little effort to understand?

Partly, to be sure, because Kennan was right on one important point: the defense of realism. The realist approach to international politics has proved to be a better guide to foreign policy than the crusading idealism of Wilson, with its excessive faith in international law and organizations, its tendency to divide mankind into good and evil, its shrill drive to evangelize and to reform, which often makes conflicts worse. In this respect, Kennan's teaching was indeed the same as Morgenthau's and Niebuhr's; and his criticism of the call for unconditional surrender during World War II demonstrated both his lack of sympathy for the psychological demands of total war and his concern for safeguarding the chances of accommodation. Mayers (following Gaddis) exaggerates the similarities between Kennan's strategy and Kissinger's diplomacy (the latter's was far more imperial), but it can be argued that the “unsentimental” realism of both those men brought more success to American diplomacy than the bouts of ideological posturing, left or right. (I would also argue that Kennan's and Kissinger's emphasis on amoral realism in America's relations with the poorer countries has been deeply deficient.)

But there is also another reason for the significance of Kennan. Behind everything that is irritating or unpleasant in his attitudes and values, there is a core of

compassion, a concern for the fragility of civilization, a horror at the atrocities of the 20th century. These informed both his sensible and necessary warning of 1946-47 about the evils of the Stalinist system, the need to drop illusions about the Soviet ally, the imperative to resist Soviet expansion, and his repeated calls since 1948 for negotiation, for arms control, for moving away from nuclear Armageddon. His appeal to Americans to face the Soviet threat after 1945, and his refusal to believe that the United States always knew better what was good for all mankind, were both based on this fear for civilization. This has been the benefit to us all from Kennan's conservatism. His emphasis on the need for the United States to deal with its domestic problems and to attract others by the strength of its example, rather than by rewards and punishments, has distinguished him from other “realists.”

Kennan's endless appeal comes from his human, all too human contradictions: between his generosity and his obtuseness, between his stern strictures against moralism in world affairs and his intense moralism in judging this and other societies, between his desire to influence and his need to think against the clichés. In his sketches, he thanks Gorbachev for a tribute the Soviet leader paid to him in Washington in December 1987, and reflects that “if you cannot have this sort of recognition from your own government. . . it is nice to have it at least from the one-time adversary.” The echo of self-pity is unnecessary. The many books written about Kennan amply compensate for the recognition of a government. This octogenarian critic of America's “deterioration” has become a national treasure.

STANLEY HOFFMANN is chairman of the Center for European Studies at Harvard.

The Economist's Heart

BY ROBERT KUTTNER

Passions Within Reason: The Strategic Role of the Emotions by Robert H. Frank

(W. W. Norton, 304 pp., \$19.95)

Standard economic theory rests on a stunningly outmoded conception of human motivation. Individuals, acting in a social vacuum, behave rationally in order to “maximize their utility.”

What other social scientists (and ordinary people) take to be emotions, values, or social imperatives, economists generally define as merely preferences or tastes. In this way, the complex range of human behaviors is narrowed to a man-

ageable single dimension, and people are reduced to consumers.

Economic theory clings to this archaic conceit for historical and methodological reasons. The Enlightenment philosophers believed in a self-regulating cosmos, in which social behavior was a variation on Newtonian mechanics. Adam Smith's idea that the general good resulted from individuals pursuing their individual well-being required individuals who behave "rationally." In the late 19th century, Alfred Marshall embellished the utilitarianism of Smith, Bentham, J. S. Mill, and Stanley Jevons, holding that economic man calculates precisely "at the margin." This conception of constant adjustment and refinement is a key underpinning of the claim that markets efficiently "aggregate preferences" to a "general equilibrium." It offers the further convenience of lending itself to the mathematics of the calculus.

Nearly a century after Freud, then, economics retains a strong vested interest in the premise of individual rationality. Experimental challenges to this assumption are typically fended off tautologically; altruism, for example, is dismissed as a special case of selfishness, since all behavior is by definition self-serving. (Gary Becker and George Stigler, in a famous article titled "*De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum*," contended that advertising really could not manipulate or create preferences, since consumers were ultimately sovereign.) Needless to say, this stance has come in for wide criticism, not to say ridicule, from the other social sciences. But economists attack it at their professional peril, since it is an enabling premise of the economic model.

Robert Frank's book is an ingenious attempt to explain the role of emotions in a language that professional economists can comprehend. Frank, a fully licensed economist at Cornell, argues that the emotions need to be understood as servants of a kind of higher rationality. When a person returns a stolen wallet, or donates blood, or declines to throw litter on a highway, this behavior is seemingly irrational but is really a more subtle form of self-interest because it reflects useful norms of fair play. From these and other examples of seemingly irrational altruistic behavior, Frank develops what he calls a "commitment model," which he counterposes to the narrow rationalist view. "Being known to experience certain emotions enables us to make commitments that would otherwise not be credible," he writes. Even a reputation for an "irrational" temper can produce a bargaining advantage,

which is not rational in the traditional sense but is nonetheless functional. As his subtitle, *The Strategic Use of the Emotions*, suggests, Frank hopes to add complexity to the standard rationalist story—to reclaim it, not to discredit it.

Frank considers the dilemma of whether to leave a generous tip in a restaurant in a distant city where the patron is unknown and unlikely to visit again. It is understandable that self-interested people keep their commitments when they expect to repeat interactions, but why not stiff the waiter if you will never see the place again? The answer, says Frank, is that our behavior affects how we feel about ourselves. "The decision to tip in the distant city is in part a decision about the kinds of character traits one wishes to cultivate. . . . The motive is not to avoid being caught, but to maintain and strengthen the predisposition to behave honestly."

In the great tradition of Adam Smith, much of Frank's narrative is built on little homilies from everyday life. He also includes a sampling of work from the body of experimental psychology, which has repeatedly demonstrated that people do not behave the way economic theory would predict. In a series of field experiments on honesty, for example, an astounding 45 percent of deliberately "lost" wallets in New York City were returned to their supposed owners (the experimenters) fully intact, cash and all. Another set of experiments showed that, contrary to the Prisoner's Dilemma hypothesis of game theory, people are often prone to cooperate even when their self-interest would dictate free-riding. Frank includes chapters on love ("people who are sensible about love might indeed be incapable of it"), on moral teaching ("there may thus be powerful advantages in having one's hands tied by emotional predispositions"), and on human decency. He concludes that "there is nothing mystical about the emotions that drive these behaviors. On the contrary . . . their presence is in perfect harmony with the underlying requirement of a theory of rational behavior."

Frank's rescue operation has won wide praise from his economist colleagues. But a good portion of what he has to offer about human inwardness will come as news only to economists. "Why [do] people often behave in ways patently contrary to their own material self-interests? Why, for example, does the prospect of guilt deter people from cheating even when they are certain they cannot be detected?" These are not profound conundrums to the other social sciences. Thus, he concludes (in italics!) that "when we see that a person has nev-

er been caught cheating, we have reason to believe that his behavior is motivated, at least in part, by nonmaterial rewards." And some of the book is merely silly. Frank digresses into tiresome physiology to demonstrate the not exactly novel fact that facial expressions and other signs of physical discomfort often betray people who are lying or cheating. He goes to great lengths to prove that love is a useful emotion, even if it is not entirely rational. (How do I love thee? Let me calculate the ways . . .)

By now, there is a broad body of literature challenging the economic conception of human motivation, on both psychological and sociological grounds: Harvey Leibenstein's work on X-efficiency, for example, or the writings of George Katona and Tibor Scitovsky on the psychology of economic decision-making have done a pretty effective job of demolishing the one-dimensional view of rational economic man. Nor did the limitations of *Homo economicus* require the methods of modern social science to become apparent. Over a century ago Veblen lampooned Marshall's concept of marginal utility, and wrote that "if, in fact, all the conventional relations of pecuniary intercourse were subject to such a perpetual rationalized, calculating revision, so that each article of usage, appreciation, or procedure must approve itself de novo on hedonistic grounds of sensuous expediency . . . it is not conceivable that the institutional fabric would last overnight."

Deliberately or not, Frank consistently slights the fundamental fact that the logic of social organization—not individual self-interest—is what requires an ethic of selfless behavior. Ironically, he does acknowledge this in passing, citing Adam Smith's early work of 1759, the "Theory of Moral Sentiments," which argued that sympathy and other such moral sentiments must be understood in collective terms. (Smith's embrace of relentless self-interest came later.) Frank is attempting to walk a middle ground, to explain cooperative or altruistic behavior in terms that even a narrow rationalist can appreciate, and still remain within the rationalist field.

Sometimes he seems plainly torn between his loyalty to the economic fraternity and the findings of his research. His best material flows when he abandons the pretense that he is here to praise economic science, and not to bury it. In a fine chapter on "Fairness," Frank takes on economists of the Chicago school and demonstrates that intrinsic conceptions of fairness have a life of their own that transcends narrow utilitarian motivations. In bargaining experiments, people

forgo one-sided outcomes out of a sense of just outcome. Wages are often paid in excess of what would clear the market, because of a sense of equity or reciprocal commitment.

If you have ingested the formula of rationalist economics, and are trapped within with the limits of deductive logic, *Passions Within Reason* is highly recom-

mended as a healthy, if mild, purgative. It is eminently readable, written with warmth and wit, but it would have been a much more potent work if Frank had pursued the logic of his criticism to where it plainly leads—beyond the radical individualism that imprisons modern economics, to the realms of community and society.

single unexpected phrase in the last sentence that explosively rewrites all that has gone before, causing the story to replay itself in one's memory over and over, acquiring new complexities. "The Cure" by Mary Ward Brown is a deftly nuanced miniature that captures certain now rapidly vanishing aspects of the way the two races once got along in the South. I hope the Russian translator was up to it, for it hasn't a single false note.

American readers will encounter here one of the Soviet Union's greatest contemporary writers, Valentin Rasputin, though the story selected (it has been published in an edition for children) lacks the darkness and the moral weight of his finest work. Bulat Okudzhava's powerful "Girl of My Dreams" is one of the few fictions that alludes to the Gulag. The title refers poignantly both to the impossibly glamorous heroine of a movie and to the narrator's mother, released in a near-vegetative state from a labor camp the very week when the movie held all Tbilisi in thrall. Anatoly Kim's moving story "Road Stop in August" presents three Red Army soldiers, an officer and two men, one of whom is being taken to court-martial for refusing to fire on an escaping prisoner. Free of any special pleading, it is full of a genuine pathos.

Pen Pals

BY CLARENCE BROWN

The Human Experience: Contemporary American and Soviet Fiction and Poetry edited by the Soviet/American Joint Editorial Committee

(Knopf, 357 pp., \$19.95)

The New Soviet Fiction: Sixteen Short Stories compiled by Sergei Zalygin

(Abbeville Press, 397 pp., \$24.95)

The *Human Experience* declares itself to be unique in the annals of publishing, and for all I know, it is: an anthology of poems and stories selected by a joint committee of American and Soviet citizens and equally divided between American and Soviet writings. The Russian-language twin of this book is being simultaneously published in the U.S.S.R. (Since Russian has no article, definite or indefinite, the title there should be somewhat more modest; readers of other linguistic communities will rightly wonder whether we and the Russians can yet lay claim to "the" human experience.)

It is the brainchild of a committee of Philadelphia Quakers, who induced the Soviets to go along with it, and it has the unexceptionable aim of bringing our two peoples closer together by having them read each other's writers. We are in far greater need of it than the Russians, let me hasten to say, since that nation of voracious readers is familiar with Salinger, Styron, Updike, and Alice Walker, not to mention classic American writers. Even literate Americans are, by and large, familiar only with those Soviet writers whose extraliterary activities have landed them on the front page.

But this arriving all swaddled in good intentions should not induce criticism to lay down its arms. It is on balance a valuable collection of good writing, well worth the price of admission. But its pro-

gram, its upbeat feel-good theme—that we and they are just folks, very similar, and ought to know each other better—admits into its pages that drop of tar in the honey, as the Russian catchphrase has it, that can be highly irritating.

Take two brief works as representatives of the tar. Andrei Voznesensky's "At Ford's Theater" conjoins the poet reading his poems "in a quavering voice" with the imagined ghost of Lincoln. It is a silly and inauthentic poem to begin with, and the English translation is so clunkingly inept as to provide a kind of sodden fun, but how it fits the theme! Soviet poet and Great Liberator! That it is a terrific cultural interface seems to have obscured the fact that it is also a waste of paper. John Updike is the author of some fine short fiction, but his contribution here is a weak sketch called "Still of Some Use" (the members of a sundered family rummage, literally, in the attic of their past); its Norman Rockwell quotient is sufficiently high to qualify it. The tendentious impulse behind *The Human Experience*, admirable as it is, means that something other than literary excellence rules the choice of its selections.

Still, *The Human Experience* is fortunately also full of wonderful writing, both Soviet and American. I am personally very grateful to have encountered works of my own compatriots I didn't know before. Bel Kaufman's "Sunday in the Park," for instance, is a jewel of a story. Outwardly simple, it leads one toward a

The better collection, *The New Soviet Fiction*, consists of 16 stories, most of them published very recently, and all of them chosen by one man, Sergei Zalygin, editor of the highly influential journal *Novy Mir*. This is not a feel-good anthology, nor has it any ideological ax to grind. His principal criterion for inclusion appears to have been nothing more than literary excellence, though a secondary yen for variety must be held to account for one or two of the lesser things. It is a banquet of good reading—some of it grim, some of it inspired silliness, and one, at least, a mindblowingly complex work of metafiction.

The world presided over by bureaucrats, politicians, and police dogs is for the most part simply irrelevant and goes unmentioned, which will come as quite a surprise to readers familiar only with the work of those Soviet writers who normally manage to excite any attention in foreign translation. There are exceptions to this, and two of them, tellingly enough, were written in the "Period of Stagnation" and only achieved publication under Gorbachev's new arrangement.

One is I. Grekova's "No Smiles," an account of a woman scientist (under her real name, Elena Ventsel, the author is one of the U.S.S.R.'s most distinguished mathematicians) whose unspecified ideological error leads her to be sub-

jected to the standard ritual degradation, a public pillorying by her own colleagues. Written in 1970, this first appeared in 1986. The other is a narrative by Vladimir Soloukhin, "Stepanida Ivanovna's Funeral," in which the narrator describes the harrowing and degrading red tape he must fight his way through in order to bury his mother in her native village. First the funeral supply store is out of coffins, then he must stand in line to get a quite unsuitable coffin (the only model to arrive), then (but only with some high-level pull from the ministerial level) he manages to get the coffin sealed in lead for the train journey, then he is obliged to trick the village priest into performing the service without the necessary permit, then he must intervene, with imperfect success, to save the priest from the wrath of the bureaucrats . . . and so on. He constantly reflects on how simple and humane this business formerly was, and still is, he supposes, in the West. It was written even earlier in the Brezhnev era, in 1967, and had to wait 20 years to see the light of day.

These two works read more like reports than works of the imagination, but the only other story with any overt political content could never be accused of factuality. It is a burlesque romp by Bulat Okudzhava called "The Art of Needles and Sins," a parody of the whole ethos of Stalinism. The mere fact that the narrator, Okudzhava himself, wears a mustache and comes from Georgia lends him enough kinship with the dictator whose image glowers down from every wall to ease his way slightly; but he is still clapped into jail for sitting in a railway restaurant late at night nursing his drink. A handbook warns citizens that Western spies can be detected by their habit of sitting alone at tables with no food and one drink.

Two of the best works deal with the mysteries of time. S. Yaroslavtsev's "The Details of Nikita Vorontsov's Life" is a work of science fiction (under his real name, Arkady Strugatsky, the author collaborates with his brother Boris on fiction known to SF fans around the world), about a man who lives serial existences, all starting from the same point.

Equally gripping and with much greater philosophical depth is the best story in the collection, Andrei Bitov's "Pushkin's Photograph (1799-2099)." It is a meta-fictional narrative, and true to the mode, it is intensely conscious of itself as narrative. The author appears in person and even describes the very circumstances in which he is producing the fiction in hand—the insects around his lamp, the interruptions of his little boy, the scene out the window. It is the summer of

1985. Starting here, he creates a range of time that stretches a century into the future and an equal length into the past. In the future (2099) a cultural congress has returned for its meeting to the Earth, now more or less a museum relic, with the better parts such as Petersburg preserved under glass. On this 300th centenary of Pushkin's birth they lament the skimpiness of the great poet's iconography. A committee selects one Igor Odoevtsev (a descendant of characters in Bitov's best-known novel, *Pushkin House*) to become the first chrononaut and return to the time of Pushkin in order to photograph him and record his voice.

In 1985, when he is 114 years into his backward flight, Igor passes over the northern village where Bitov is busy imagining him into further existence. Arrived at last in the first third of the 19th century, Igor manages to dog Pushkin's footsteps at several well-known points in his existence, though the great man, amused at the presumption of this chronological yodel, never admits him to anything like closer acquaintance. This furnishes the bulk of the story and does not lend itself to summary, for the subtleties of its meditation on our relationship with the past demand to be experienced directly.

Like most of Bitov's work, this story is full of wit and the electric excitement, the sheer exuberance of creativity—art delighting in the miracle of its own existence. The art of Pushkin, finally, is the true heroine of the work. Igor returns defeated and mad, with no photographs of the person and no recordings of the voice. But the words of Pushkin—they are the genuine, the indelible time-travelers. No such "moral" is spelled out, of course, but that, as I read it, is the implication. It is highly satisfying, and so is the greater part of this valuable collection.

CLARENCE BROWN is professor of comparative literature at Princeton University.

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 4*

in fact paying an *average* rate of less than 28 percent, which (not at all absurdly) rises to 28 percent at the highest levels as exemptions are phased out.

MICHAEL CAVALLO
Cambridge, Massachusetts

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.



THE NEW REPUBLIC SUBSCRIBER SERVICE IS ONLY A PHONE CALL AWAY.

Do you have any questions about payments? Change of address? Delivery or other subscription problems?

Just pick up your phone and dial our toll-free hotline at

800-274-6686
(In Co: 303-447-9330)

Our operators are specially trained to provide you with quick, efficient subscription service.

For most efficient service, please have a copy of your latest magazine handy. If you have a question concerning payment, please have a copy of your cancelled check in front of you so we can quickly resolve your problem over the phone.

Of course, we can still handle your business by mail if you prefer. Simply send us a copy of your address label from the front of your last magazine and your change of address or other correspondence to:

**THE NEW REPUBLIC
P.O. Box 56515
Boulder, CO 80322-6515**

Request for new subscriptions, renewals of current subscriptions and gift subscriptions should also be sent to the address above.

By phone or by mail, TNR Subscriber Service has never been easier.

WASHINGTON DIARIST

Cravings

KAUS'S IRRESPONSIBLE RULE OF Journalism No. 1: It's usually a mistake *not* to generalize from your own experience. Many conscientious newsmen try to avoid projecting their interests on the world. Yes, editorial solipsism does give readers a tad too many stories on coastal erosion in the Hamptons, feuds at Condé Nast, or the menace of Lyme Disease (which *Newsweek* put on its cover after an editor's spouse was bitten by an infected tick). Yes, it's egotistical for me to think that what happens to me happens to everyone. But it's even more egotistical to think that what happens to me doesn't happen to everyone. I'm not that special. If I feel a sudden craving for a maid, a baby, or a small sports car, chances are a lot of people of my age and income (key caveat) are feeling the same way. *Newsweek's* Lyme cover was a best seller and probably prevented a lot of sickness.

ONE THING I CRAVE IS TO BE ABLE to play sports and have people pay attention, something that last happened to me sophomore year in high school. Again, I'm not alone in nursing this desire. One way people work it out is by paying thousands of dollars to attend "fantasy" camps, where they dribble or field grounders with big-leaguers. Another way is to seek public office. In a campaign, you can just stop by a local playground and the cameras will roll; the press will go wild if you hit a jumper. Run for president, like Al Gore, and you get to scrimmage with the Kentucky varsity. Get elected president, and reporters will cover even the most pathetic athletic endeavor as if it were Wimbledon. Witness Bush's recent tennis, golf, and fishing exhibition. As the AP's Rita Beamish noted, Bush on several occasions easily could have gone off to play tennis with his friends in peace. Instead, he invited reporters to watch. I don't think he did this simply to generate more nauseating coverage of his presidency, which in turn might help him sell his agenda. I think this attention (rather than any agenda) is *why* he sought the presidency. As vice president he could have power, money, fame. Only as president would anyone care whether he caught a fish. The man who has pursued this line of juvenile gratification to its conclusion, however,

is President Carlos Saúl Menem of Argentina. Menem has taken to playing soccer and basketball in huge arenas with his country's top pros. Last outing (basketball) he scored 13 points, after ordering his coach not to take him out of the game.

A RELATED REASON FOR ENTERING politics is the ambition (once ascribed to Father Greeley) to have no unpublished thoughts. If you are a congressman, and reasonably witty, reporters will be only too happy to write down practically everything you say and stick it in the next morning's paper. The ideal type of such a politician, for me, was always a young legislator from Massachusetts named Barney Frank. When Boston wanted to spend billions to lower its central highway, Frank said, "It would be cheaper to raise the city." Reporters wrote it down. It was Frank who said that for Reaganites "concern for life begins at conception and ends at birth." I admire Frank for another reason: he is candid, not just because he reveals things, but because he has thought seriously enough about his positions to be able to defend them spontaneously against all comers. He is, as they say, "a great interview."

THAT EXPLAINS, IN PART, THE RELUCTANCE of many reporters to stoke the story of Frank and call boy Stephen Goble. On "Inside Washington," *Boston Globe* columnist Tom Oliphant said, "I would expect him to survive this smear in good standing." Pollster Harrison Hickman was quoted on the evening news saying that Democrats were in a mood to fight if Republicans tried to make an issue of the Goble affair. These initial attempts at working up pro-Frank outrage had a certain loony quality. So you say the congressman hired a male prostitute from the want ads ("hot bottom plus large endowment") for \$80 to have sex? And then he "employed" the prostitute "in a personal capacity" for two years, during which time the man ran a whorehouse out of the congressman's apartment? Wanna make something of it? Just like those sleazy Republicans to try to use that to win votes! As if you needed Lee Atwater to take advantage of this sort of political manna.

FRANK ALSO VIOLATED THE norms that usually govern politicians confronted with appalling disclosures. These rules were codified by James Boyd in a famous 1970 *Washington Monthly* article called "The Ritual of Wiggle." Specifically, Frank broke Boyd's Rule 2: "Confess to what is known, evade what is unknown." Frank admitted he knew Goble practiced "personal" prostitution while also "working" for him (he just didn't know Goble was running a prostitution ring in his home). This was a damning de-

tail the press could never have uncovered. It would have been Goble's dubious word against Frank's. Either Frank's candor is suicidal, or else he has rewritten Boyd's rule book, realizing that if you "confess to what is unknown" it may dramatically enhance your credibility. For the record, Frank did faithfully follow Boyd's Rule 7: "At the moment of deepest personal disgrace, announce for re-election."

I DON'T KNOW ANYBODY WHO has been mugged lately. A trend? Sure enough, in 1988 robberies in Ward 3—the rich, white, Northwest section of Washington where I live—were at their lowest level in years. This suggests a dirty little secret of the crack epidemic: it may have made the streets *safer* for many affluent whites (even as it has been a disaster for ghetto blacks). Why might muggings decline? Because some criminals who would otherwise be making their money by mugging are now making their money selling drugs. Meanwhile, crackheads who need to feed their habits are so desperate or impulsive that they rob in their own impoverished neighborhoods instead of undertaking forays into mine. If crack hasn't made daily life worse for affluent whites, how strongly will they support the Drug War? Surveys show white D.C. voters worry more about potholes than drugs.

A SCRIPTWRITER WITH WHOM I used to play softball when I lived in LA is about to sign a lucrative deal with Universal Television. The trend this suggests is rising income inequality. It also suggests the difficulty of trying to fight rising income inequality. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the scriptwriter and his wife will work for three or four years on sitcoms. They will be paid \$18 million. *Eighteen million dollars*. (And I thought writers were getting fat when *Vanity Fair* offered two dollars a word.) No conceivable amount of redistributive taxation will cabin that sort of market-generated inequality. The funny thing is, I don't begrudge this guy a penny, and not just because I have an interest in writers being overpaid. It seems he created "The Wonder Years," which several parents I know say is the only show they are happy to have their kids watch. Here is someone who can actually make something millions of people enjoy, which is exactly what capitalism should reward (as opposed to, say, the ability to extract government subsidies, fool consumers, or file lawsuits). Maybe what Democrats should attack isn't how many Americans are rich but how some of those Americans (probably including the majority of big Democratic contributors) *get* rich. But I generalize.

MICKEY KAUS



JUST SAY NO.

America is hooked on foreign oil. Today, we import almost 40 percent of the oil we use—even more than in 1973, when the Arab embargo plunged us into gas lines, rationing, and recession.

The more we can use nuclear energy, instead of imported oil, to generate electricity, the less we have to depend on foreign nations.

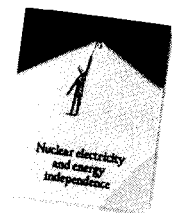
The 110 nuclear plants in the U.S. have cut our foreign oil dependence by over three billion barrels since 1973. And they have cut foreign oil payments by over one hundred billion dollars.

But 110 nuclear plants will not be enough to meet our growing electricity demand. More plants are needed.

To help kick the foreign oil habit, we need to rely more on

our own energy sources, like nuclear energy.

For a free booklet on nuclear energy, write to the U.S. Council for Energy Awareness, P.O. Box 66103, Dept. SN21, Washington, D.C. 20035.



U.S. COUNCIL FOR ENERGY AWARENESS

Nuclear energy means more energy independence.

THE PERFECT RECESS

PARLIAMENT
Lights



9 mg "tar," 0.7 mg nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking By Pregnant Women May Result in Fetal Injury, Premature Birth, And Low Birth Weight.